

Adventure



**JUNE
15 CENTS**

Copyrighted, 1913

Trade-Mark registered

THE RIDGWAY COMPANY

Publishers of

EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE

"THE GRENADIER"—A Two-Part Philippine Novel

Digitized by Google
Original painting by Sydney K. Rice

Dear Bill :

Whatever else you don't, don't miss the July issue of ADVENTURE. Never mind the other necessities of life. Give 'em up gladly, but don't miss this July treat. If this isn't the corkingest number ever, call me a Julyre. There's the first instalment of a new serial by a chap named Maurice Drake. He has called his yarn "WO²". That's mystic enough, Lord knows, but when you begin to read it, you'll get Scotch itch with impatience trying to Sherlock the outcome. It is a great yarn, and you'll thank me for the tip. "WO²" will run through several issues, and you'll be sorry when it comes to an end.

Then, there's a complete novel called "Hookum Hai." When I tell you that it's an Indian Mutiny yarn and that it is by Talbot Mundy at his best, you won't want any further urging.

F. W. Wallace has got one of his amusing fisherman's tales called "Loot and Laundry." It shows, amongst other surprising things, how a "perfect lady" can take care of herself with a bar of soap. You'll wonder how the Dickens the Chinaman got mixed up with it. I did.

If you want to know how to cow a bull-fighter, read "Pesos of the President," by Ledward Rawlinson. It relates how a real bad man got turned into a gentle husband overnight, just because she had the right color eyes. Can you beat it?

So long, Bill. Starve if you have to, but get the July ADVENTURE.

Your old pal,

STEVE.



VOL.6 ADVENTURE NO.2
Arthur Sullivant Hoffman MANAGING EDITOR
CONTENTS for JUNE 1913

Cover Design	Sidney H. Riesenbergr	
At Maneuvers. A Story	Talbot Mundy	3
Getting Catfoot. A Story	George Vaux Bacon	11
The Tale-Teller. A Story	Edgar Wallace	19
Sanders of West Africa Gets Suspicious		
Campbell an' Me an' the B'ar. A Story	Frank Houghton	25
The Tops'l Schooner. A Poem	Kenneth Rand	29
Red Ned of Remington's. A Complete Novelette	L. Warburton	30
An Adventure of the Boer War		
The Wreck of the Cod-Seeker. An Article	Colin McKay	43
White Man vs. Tiger. A Story	E. A. Morphy	51
The Grenadier. A Two-part Serial. I.	Donald Francis McGrew	59
A Story of Mindanao		
The Even Break. A Story	J. M. Allen	100
A Message from the Balkans. A Story	Arthur Somers Roche	108
Down the Old Mississippi, A Serial Story. Conclusion	Raymond S. Spears	117
How Three Men and a Motor-Boat Drifted into Amusing Adventures among the River-Folk		
Paid. A Story	W. Townend	132
Medal of Honor Men. An Article	Stephen Allen Reynolds	140
Winners of the American Victoria Cross		
The Luck of Nawth Ca'liner Bob. A Story	Hapsburg Liebe	147
The Perfect Crime. A Story	Hugh Pendexter	152
The Shanghaied Policeman. A Story	S. B. H. Hurst	157
A Tale of Sunday's Boarding-House		
A Dash of Irish. A Complete Novel	W. F. McCaleb and Eugene P. Lyle, Jr.	160
A Tale of Mexico's War for Independence		
The Camp-Fire.		216
A Meeting-Place for Readers, Writers and Adventurers		
Headings	Walter J. Enright	

Issued monthly. Yearly subscription, \$1.50 in advance. Single copy, fifteen cents

Foreign postage, \$1.00 additional. Canadian postage, 30 cents.

Trade-mark Registered; Copyright, 1913, by The Ridgway Company in the United States and Great Britain

Published by THE RIDGWAY COMPANY

Erman J. Ridgway, President

Ray Brown, Secretary and Treasurer

Spring & Macdougall Streets, New York City

5, Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London, W. C., England

Entered at the New York Post-Office as Second Class Matter



THE Adventurers' Club has taken hold past all expectations. The New York and Chicago clubs are long since solidly established and are booming along with ever-growing enthusiasm. By the time you read this the Los Angeles club will have had its first dinner. Probably also the Montreal club. Applications are in from half a dozen of the larger cities in the United States. Bangkok, Siam, and Honolulu are likely to fall in line. Applications from individuals in the towns and smaller cities come in every day.

There is no provision for eligible adventurers who do not live near enough an organized chapter to attend its meetings. The thing for such adventurers to do is to organize a local chapter of their own. If the home town is too small to furnish the right kind of material, form a club for the general vicinity, including other towns, and hold quarterly, instead of monthly, meetings. You will find it well worth your while. A bunch of real adventurers can produce an evening about as full of genuine interest as any gathering of people in the world. That isn't just theory or "hot air;" we've been proving it for months in Chicago and New York.

IF YOU did not see last month's statement of the simple procedure necessary, we can furnish you with copies of that statement. Perhaps we can put you in touch with other good local men, directly or through the "Camp-Fire."

And, by the way, any real adventurers in Chicago, New York, Los Angeles or Montreal not yet reached by the clubs in these cities can get in touch with the right men by dropping me a line to be forwarded. Adventurers in Boston, St. Louis, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Honolulu, Minneapolis, Worcester, Mass., Providence, R. I., and Washington, D. C., can get in communication with other interested adventurers by doing the same.

There are eight places that ought particularly to have Adventurers' Clubs and from which no communications have as yet arrived, partly because there hasn't been time—Toronto, Manila, Quebec, Shanghai, New

Orleans, Seattle, the Canal Zone and several places in Alaska.

THE general order takes on more and more importance and gives promise of big things. The consensus of ideas from adventurers in general is for a world-wide brotherhood, informal in its obligations, but standing for a welcome and a helping hand to any worthy fellow member in whatever part of the globe he may be met.

Phil Sawyer of the Chicago club has designed a small badge which will probably be adopted. There are numerous suggestions for identification cards, countersigns and ritual. Out of them all will be evolved a plan that will be as simple and practical as possible. If ever there was an organization specially designed for red-blooded men, it is this one. And red-blooded men are taking hold of it in a red-blooded way and making it something worth while.

SINCE the above was written I have had a letter from Montreal saying that the club there has held its first meeting, elected a secretary and treasurer, and laid plans for the first dinner. They feel sure "that within a couple of months we will have at least 50 members and at the end of six months we will have the full quota of 100, though I think we will have applications from several times that number." I predict that Montreal will have one of the best clubs in the order. As it ought to have. (Incidentally, the New York club is considering raising its "full quota" from 100 to 200.)

ONE man writes complaining the club costs too much for many real adventurers. Also that it is for commissioned officers, prominent men, etc., not for the rank and file. The latter idea is too ridiculous for consideration. Democracy is the key-note, and every real man is welcomed.

Expense? None whatever for the general order. In the local chapter each man pays for his own dinner (in New York the limit is \$2). In addition there is the cost of some envelopes and paper for the secretary and the sending of post-card dinner notices—a few cents per month per man. Chicago lumps it all at \$5 a year. If you can run a club—and a big one—any cheaper than that, please let us know.

ARTHUR SULLIVAN HOFFMAN.

Adventure

Registered in the United States Patent Office

June
1913
Vol. 6
No. 2



AT MANEUVERS by Talbot Mundy

ESTABLISHED precedent and the Queen's Regulations to the contrary notwithstanding, nobody would have dreamed of leaving Private Sid Emmetts in charge of a detail of seven other privates in the middle of Salisbury Plain, had there been anybody else available. But maneuvers are maneuvers, and are not war by any means; war is war, and had this been war-time Sid Emmetts would have lain in a trench these days past—face-upward under six feet or so of mold. There are several quite legitimate ways of getting rid of undesirables when the real Big Game begins.

But in time of peace there are several things other than a man's deserts to be considered; and Sid Emmetts was senior private

—instead of guest, as he doubtless should have been, in one of Her Gracious Majesty's hotels. He was a marksman, and could help to swell the musketry-returns. When he was drunk enough—and that happened whenever he could raise the money—he could squint down the barrel of his Lee-Enfield and put seven shots running through the bull at eight hundred yards; and then he could walk, reel, roll or lurch two hundred yards back to the range behind him, and repeat the performance at a thousand.

Men who can do that are hard to find. You can teach a Hottentot to drill (mind you, they've done it!) and you can make a South Sea Islander behave himself, but you can't teach men to shoot; they must be born that way.

So Sid Emmetts had his uses.

The War Office, which sucks sweet solace from statistics, and loves to read how many bull's-eyes have been scored under circumstances one never meets in war, can stop the leave of officers whose musketry returns are "bad." So the regiment kept Sid Emmetts; but it failed to love him.

And Sid reciprocated. He stayed with the regiment because he had to, until his time was up. And he made his "possible" with preposterous regularity on the range for three reasons: He liked shooting—it brought him money—and money bought him drink. But he loathed the regiment with a whole-hearted hate that would have done credit to an anarchist. The three P's—Pipe-clay, Politeness and Punctuality—were to him the three-headed embodiment of What-ought-not-to-be, and he hated everything and everybody that represented them.

A man can't feel such sentiments, and live up to them according to his own lights, without letting that small fraction of the universe that comes in contact with him know it. A man may feel that way, and hide his thoughts, and win respect. He may even rule men. But if he once lets men know that the basis of his thoughts is disrespect he will reap tenfold of what he sows. And Sid Emmetts was not a silent man. He was a big, heavy-mouthed, loose-lipped Cockney. He said what he thought, and what he thought was usually blasphemous; and he blundered into blasphemy where wiser, wicked, less tender-hearted men would have trodden lightly round the outskirts of it.

 SO IT was with something more than hesitation, it was with a final shrug of the shoulders at what could not be helped, that his company officer left him saluting respectfully with his back against a bale of hay, and marched off with the remainder of his men and all his non-coms, to fit into the jig-saw scheme of things—or try to.

They were trying new theories that Autumn. After centuries of marching dear-bought, rum-dazed men close-packed into the firing-line, it had dawned on somebody at the War Office that it might be wiser to extend them. That somebody was some one in authority, whose voice was audible, and to whom the press kotowed; so some-

thing had to happen. But two other things had happened at the same time: A Chancellor of the Exchequer had saved the Government by speechmaking on the subject of economy, and a civilian who was bidding for a knighthood had declared that the way to put an army in the field was to contract for the provisioning and transport of it.

So the army suffered. And because the press had taken up the cause of the contractor, and had devoted whole columns to the subject daily, the public came to see it suffer. Men who paid taxes uncomplainingly, because their payment had become a habit, brought their families to help them wonder at the New Efficiency, and the soldiers, writhing under the torture of the New Idea, writhed doubly because the taxpayers thought it wonderful. For economy was blended with the New Idea in proportion of ten to one.

The man-who-mattered—whose voice was heard above the din of politics—had thought, too, of the scheme of "Skeleton Brigades." Nobody blamed him; he had a theory, a perfectly good theory, and he wanted it tried out. To get it tried out he was compelled to devise a scheme that would not cost too much money. To him, the theory was the thing. And the press agreed with him.

So, in the Autumn maneuvers of that ever-memorable year, one sergeant and two privates were a company. An officer with half a section was two battalions; and one company was made to represent an army corps. The rest was easy!

Umpires with white linen bandages on their arms galloped here and there across miles of country, and had to ask solitary privates whether they were casualties or companies. Ten men—who happened to be ten men, and nothing else—fired close-range volleys at five other men who were a company. Whole companies—that were supposed to represent army corps, but were oblivious of the fact—retreated whenever anybody waved a flag. Generals-of-division swore, colonels wept—and privates grinned. The gunners crashed through, and past, and in among the wide-flung maze of men—getting the range on anything that showed above the sky-line—claiming to have decimated whole brigades that were quite conceivably their friends; ignoring altogether the five-man ambushes, that represented two brigades and hid behind ten trees—gal-

loping, sweating and grinning as gunners grin the wide world over.

Of all the maneuvering that ever happened since the world began, it was the most bewilderingest, and the worst; and possibly because the theory was correct!

At the very least, it was a good thing to be out of, and Sid Emmetts sighed with satisfaction as he viewed the pile of forage that he, and the seven with him, were to guard until the civilian contractors came.

The officer's back was turned already, and low-growled abuse of him—just loud enough for half his men to hear—had begun to emanate from Emmetts, when recollection came that there was something yet undone. Under this new scheme, every move and every order was to be explained in detail to the men, and the officer came back again and tried to do it.

"Now, you understand, you men," he suggested hopefully, "your rear's in that direction. No, it's not—it's over there. You're supposed to represent two regiments, and these bales here represent the defending-army's supplies. We're part of the defending-army. The invading-army is supposed to be working round our flank, and our business is to hold them in check until our transport can arrive. Then we're to retreat. The transport ought to reach here in about two hours. When the wagons come you're to help the men load them up, and then march off behind them, acting as a rear-guard. Now, d'you all understand that?"

There was a low-voiced murmur of assent, although most of the eight men had barely listened, and the officer knew it. But he had done his duty, and it was no fault of his if the New Idea had failed to interest the rank and file. He had hard work not to show his own boredom, as he lit a cigarette and started off with the remainder of his men again.

 THE moment he had gone Sid Emmetts sat down luxuriously on the nearest bale of hay, and loosened his belt; a chorus of clicks echoed him as the seven followed suit.

"So we're two bleedin' regiments, are we?" growled Emmetts. "An' we've got to do the work o' two bleedin' reg'ments, a loadin' up these 'ere stores!"

His words were received in silence, for the rest recognized them as the prelude to a monologue that it would not be well to in-

terrupt; Emmetts's fists were as ready and effective as his tongue and, like all born anarchists, he was convinced that every other man's opinions should bow to his.

"Bein' a bleedin' reg'ment a-sittin' on a hay-bale's all O. K.," he continued. "I ain't got no fault to find with that! But bein' two bleedin' reg'ments, an' loadin' up the bleedin' forage of a bleedin' Army Corps, is——"

Words were beyond him, and he lapsed for a moment into speechless wonder at the awfulness of the idea.

"An' why should they go an' pick us out, I'd like to know?" he continued, when his mental elasticity reasserted itself at last, and he began slowly to recover from the shock. "'Ere are we, been marchin' an' countermarchin' an' maneuverin' across the map since four o'clock, an' we've got to load up hay; an' there's the Lincolns, an' the D. L. I.'s, what 'aven't done a bleedin' thing except sittin' still all day, an' 'alf o' them are told off to make believe they're casualties an' lie down where they are for the poultice-whallopers to practise on! Bleedin' shame, I call it!"

Nobody answered him. Emmetts was in a mood to quarrel, and sprawling in silence on a hay-bale was better fun than fighting a man who always fought to maim, or dodging him for twenty minutes round and round the pile of stores. They lit their pipes, in flagrant disregard of orders, and let him talk.

"I'm goin' to be a perishin' casualty afore the bleedin' wagons gets 'ere," growled Emmetts, suddenly aware of an idea. "I'll be 'alf a 'undred bleedin' casualties! I'm goin' to lie on my stummick on the grass, an' smoke my pipe until the stretcher-bearers come; an' they can carry me all the bleedin' way back to camp, an' be —— to 'em!"

The seven sat up suddenly, and began to take an interest. Mark Jones, who was known as "Anthony," and was the regiment's only other orator, took a hand in the discussion.

"Ow can we be casualties?" he demanded. "You 'eard what 'e said? We've got to stop 'ere until the wagons come. The enemy's two miles or more away over there, an' we sha'n't get no excuse for fallin' out."

"Sha'n't we?" sneered Emmetts. "You watch me make one! Listen 'ere," he added, realizing suddenly that his suggestion was

soaking in, "all we get's one-an'-a-penny a day; and what do them blamed civilians get? The men gets paid union rates, an' the blokes what 'ires 'em makes a fortune—an' we're supposed to do the bleedin' work! Who calls that fair play—anybody?"

"All the same——" suggested Anthony.

"Who's in command 'ere?" demanded Emmetts pugnaciously. "Who's the senior bleedin' private o' this detachment—me or you?"

"Rub it in!" said Anthony.

"I'll rub it into your bleedin' carcass with my boot-'eel, if you don't 'old your jaw!" growled Emmetts.

Anthony seized his lower jaw in both hands, and gripped it tightly. "How long have I got to hold it, Colonel?" he demanded.

Emmetts leaned over and seized a mallet from among the stores. He waited for half a minute, pretending to grope for something he had dropped. Then, with a sudden cat-like spring, he took Anthony unawares. Emmetts could throw straight, as well as shoot. The mallet took Anthony full on the breast-bone, and sent him tumbling over backward to the 'ground. It took the man three minutes to recover, and when he once more crawled back to his hay-bale Emmetts had the forum to himself. There was no one else disposed to argue.

"As I was sayin' afore that blighter interrupted," remarked Emmetts, "this-'ere detachment's goin' to consist o' casualties afore the wagons come, an' the bleedin' civilian contractors are goin' to do the work!"

There was nothing to be gained by answering him, especially as he seemed disposed to take the responsibility; and he was undoubtedly in charge. Nobody could blame them if he chose to disobey his orders and they obeyed him—or, at least, so they reasoned. At all events it was much better for the present to lie quietly where they were than to worry about what had not happened yet. They began to watch the bewildering maneuvers of the troops around them, and to criticize them dispassionately.



SUDDENLY a battery of horse-artillery came into sight on the shoulder of some rising ground. When first seen it was advancing at the trot. It changed direction aimlessly once or twice, and then halted, while its command-

ing-officer scoured the surrounding country through his glasses.

"Ere's our chance!" growled Emmetts.

"Rot!" said Anthony. "That's Royal 'Orse; they're on our side. The field-artillery are with the invadin'-army."

"Who asked you to speak?" demanded Emmetts. "D' you want another feel o' that mallet?"

Anthony subsided, and Emmetts, lying flat along his hay-bale, began to study the battery critically.

"I'll bet he's lost hisself!" he declared gleefully. "He don't know who's the enemy, nor which is what? 'E's got an umpire along with 'im, an' the umpire don't know neither!"

"The bleedin' umpire wouldn't be allowed to tell 'im anyhow!" suggested Anthony.

"No more he would! Now then!" said Emmetts. "We're supposed to be two reg'ments a-keepin' guard over these 'ere stores. Two reg'ments at eight 'undred yards range is good to wipe out one battery any day o' the week! Fall in, facin' the battery in front!"

The men climbed off their hay-bales, and fell in sulkily. They felt no enthusiasm, but on the other hand there was not one of them disposed to dispute the authority of Emmetts. They knew him of old, and they had seen what happened to Anthony.

"Right dress! To two paces—open order—extend! That'll give 'em a good target; no use in extendin' any further! Now then—lie down!—volley firin'—ready! At the battery in front—at eight 'undred—present!—fire!"

The blank cartridge volley barked out its alarm, and the officer commanding the battery turned his glasses on the pile of stores.

"Ready!" ordered Emmetts. "Give 'im another one!"

Once again the eight Lee-Enfields barked in unison; and this time the battery moved in answer to them. With a sudden, swift, uncanny swoop the guns jerked round to "action front," and the horses disappeared behind the hill. For a whole minute the six guns stayed pointed in the direction of the stores; then the horses reappeared, and the limbers were attached again.

"Here he comes!" said Emmetts. "Cease fire! On the right—close order—march! Order arms! Stand at—ease!"

The umpire, picking his way a little

gingerly down the slope, rode rather leisurely toward them, waving a small white flag from time to time.

"Now, mind you!" ordered Emmetts, "it's me as does the talkin'; nobody else says a word, d'ye 'ear?"

Nobody else wanted to speak. They had knowingly fired on their own side; they were therefore either fools or rogues, and they much preferred to leave the explanation up to Emmetts. They were already beginning to regret what they had done. It was beginning to dawn on them that seven strong able-bodied men would sound a little foolish trying to put the blame on one other man, who was known to be the regimental scapegoat. And besides, why did the battery stop where it was, and why did the umpire ride toward them so slowly? Umpires usually galloped.

But the umpire reached them at last, after what seemed to the culprits like an hour of waiting for him. He reined in his horse, and sat and looked at them for half a minute more before he spoke, and the culprits quaked—all except Emmetts.

"T'shun! Shoulder arms!" he ordered, in a voice that betrayed no emotion of any kind.

"Who are you men?" demanded the umpire.

"Order arms! . . . A detail in charge of this forage and general stores, sir, with orders to defend it against all comers!" answered Emmetts.

"Didn't anybody tell you that the horse-artillery were with the defending-army?" asked the umpire.

"No, sir!" lied Emmetts.

"Well, you've fired on your own side, and you've been fired on! You're blotted out—wiped off the map—non-existent! You've been shot to pieces with shrapnel and common shell, and you'll incidentally be reported to your commanding officer! Fall out now, and march over to those woods there, out of the way. Report yourselves as casualties to the first officer you meet. Who's your company-officer?"

Emmetts told him, and the umpire made a note of it before he rode away again.

"Told you so!" said Emmetts, the moment he was out of hearing. "Didn't I say as we'd be bleeding casualties afore the wagons came? Come on. No need to march in formation. And see 'ere, mind, we ain't goin' to meet no officers! We'll go an' look for 'em somewhere in them woods!"



THE eight marched off, with an alacrity that was in keeping with their feeling of relief. They had half expected to be made prisoners and, finding that they were still free men, their feelings toward Emmetts had undergone a pronounced change. After all, the whole thing had been his idea. It was he who had saved them from the hard labor of loading wagons, and now, if they were careful, they would be able to loaf through the whole of the afternoon. They had to give Emmetts credit for it.

The artillerymen watched them until they reached the wood. There Emmetts halted them, and waited until the guns drove out of sight. When the last gun had bumped beyond a rise, he peered cautiously about him, and, seeing nobody, plunged straight into the wood, with the seven following him in a straggling line.

It was only a little wood—hardly more than a copse in fact—perhaps four hundred yards long, and half as many wide. But it was dense, and choked with undergrowth, and difficult to see through. There was no better hiding-place on the whole of Salisbury Plain for eight men who were not anxious to overwork themselves. They scrambled through to the far side, and lay down in a cluster, all together, where they could smoke in peace, and watch the evolutions of the army without the slightest risk of being seen by any one.

"Now, who's your blooming General?" demanded Emmetts, pulling out his pipe and loosening his belt again, and grunting with satisfaction. "Moses leadin' the sufferin' Sheenies out o' the wilderness, that's me! 'Ow's this for milk an' 'oney? All we need's a drink!"

A murmur of voices came from somewhere down below them, and Emmetts pushed his bull-head through the undergrowth to discover the source of it. At the edge of the copse the trees ended suddenly, and a gravel-bank—a cliff almost—dropped sheer to a road below. It was a narrow, winding road, with room on it for only one cart at a time; on either side of it there was a deep ditch, unprotected by a rail of any kind, and it wound snakewise between two gravel-banks in such a way that anybody using it could neither see, nor yet be seen, by any one who might be coming down toward him from the high ground on the right. But from above, where Emmetts and

the seven lay, there was a good view of the whole road for almost a mile—up to where it dipped over the horizon.

The civilian contractor's men had chosen just that spot to rest in, until their midday labor of feeding half an army should commence. They were sitting squatted in the roadway, and in their midst, with its wheels just clear of the ditch on either side, was one solitary wagon.

"Lord, look at that!" swore Emmetts.

It was the wagon that he apostrophized, and the seven others pushed their heads beside him through the undergrowth to see what it was that had startled him. Truly it was the wagon! There was a barrel of beer in it, newly broached, and the contractor's men, even as Emmetts and the others watched them, filled up a gallon jar from it, and passed it, glistening, from mouth to mouth! Was ever anything more mortifying since maneuvers were first invented for the vexation of the soldier-man?

They dared not speak. They dared not call attention to themselves in any way, for there might be some one in the crowd below who would consider it his business to report them to an officer. Over on the far bank there were at least a dozen officers within easy ear-shot. They could only watch with watering mouths, and curse their luck and the contractor's men!

Seated in among the crowd were a dozen or more civilians proper—bank clerks maybe, or shopkeepers, out for a holiday. They too had chosen that cool spot in which to rest, and they too sipped gurgling samples of the beer.

There were even two women there, and one of the women accepted the proffered jar. She raised it, and it slipped—and half of the beer was spilled into her bosom.

During the roar of laughter that followed down below, Emmetts could swear to his heart's content with no fear of discovery. But even swearing failed to ease him, and he had to draw his head in and look away.

"Strike me perishing pink!" he groaned. "It's more than human flesh and blood can stand! Here are we—soldiers—ready an' willin' to die for the bleedin' country—an' fit to die o' thirst. An' strike me everlastin' column o' fours if there ain't a lot o' civilians with beer to burn, an' the blighters give it to a woman an' she SPILLS it! Oh, Lord!"

Presently he was forced to take another look. He could not help himself. The knowledge that all that beer was being squandered down below acted on him like a magnet, and he had to peer above the bank and eye the orgy. Wild hopes of accident obsessed him. Somebody might come and order the men away. They might be sent off somewhere in a hurry and leave their barrel. Or they might dump the half empty barrel off the wagon and leave it. There was no hope too forlorn, and no idea too wild for Emmetts at that moment.



"SAY, you blokes," he whispered, drawing in his head again, "look up that road! If only a gun'd take charge on top o' the hill there, an' come blundering down on top of 'em, what a mess there'd be! They'd all get scrunched up into a pulp, an' we'd be able to climb down and swipe that beer—eh?"

"—!" said Anthony, peering out beside him, and glancing up the hill and down along the road again. "That 'd be a mess all right! 'F they heard it coming, there'd be no time to get out o' the road! The gun 'd hit the wagon ker-biff! an' the whole durned proposition 'd go pulpin' up together on top o' them!"

"Lord send it happens!" prayed Emmetts piously. "I'd like to see them civilians mixed up in one red, squelchy mess, I would—even if the beer went with 'em. 'Ow many d'you think a gun could kill, Mark, if it ran loose in the middle of them?"

"Pretty near all of 'em!" said Anthony. He had forgotten the mallet incident already. The pain of the bruise had died away, and there was a mutual thirst and a mutual red idea to draw him again to Emmetts and help drown the recollection of the blow. The other men did not matter. They were sprawling among the undergrowth, courting sleep already, and oblivious of everything except the fact that they had no work to do.

Emmetts and Anthony had forgotten them; they were like two vultures, waiting with ill-suppressed impatience—peering, sharpening their talons, gloating over the visionary prospect of a holocaust.

But the guns were on the far side of the bank, nearly a mile away; Emmetts and Anthony could see them, halted, their men dismounted to rest the horses, still and undeadly as the ground they rested on.

"As a matter of fact," said Emmetts, "there's probably a barrier across the road, up beyond the hill, to prevent the troops from using it. Otherwise they'd never have let the civvies camp here."

"I'll go and see," said Anthony; and, before Emmetts had time to answer him, he had slipped away and disappeared into the wood. Emmetts glanced after him, shrugged his great hulking shoulders, waited for him, grew tired of waiting and almost fell asleep.



HE WAS roused from his doze by Anthony, who dropped almost noiselessly beside him, and slapped his thigh.

"Curse you!" swore Emmetts. "What in — did you do that for?"

He aimed a savage kick at Anthony, who blocked it, and held his hand up to command silence.

"There was a barrier!" he whispered. "One pole, resting on two uprights. I took it down!"

"The — you did?"

"You bet! You know them new water-carts—two-horse, two-wheel propositions without brakes, that the contractor's usin'? They're all comin' along up over the hill there. The first one that comes 'll take this road sure, now that the barrier's down, 'cause there ain't any road the other way—only a grass track. First thing you know the whippetrees 'll be bangin' into the 'orses' 'ocks, fit to scare the devil. That 'll frighten 'em an' set 'em going, same as it always does, an' fore you know it there 'll be a two-ton wagon full o' water come kerplump into the middle o' the bunch! Now you sit tight an' watch!"

"—!" said Emmetts. He lay and watched the notch on the near horizon where the little winding ribbon of a road slipped out of sight. He was speechless—fascinated.

Over in front of the two men the guns began to move again. They wheeled into a fresh formation, and streaked off at the gallop, while brigades began to swing behind brigades and shift their ground. But the two men saw nothing of it, heard nothing of it. The din of galloping guns, the thousand-hoofed thunder of the squadrons, the tramp of infantry rose up to heaven, drowning every other sound. But Emmetts and Anthony lay and listened—through and

underneath the noise—for the sound of wheels and hoof-beats up above.

Then, with a shock like a blast of dynamite, a rattling volley burst out from a ridge near-by. In a second the whole countryside so far as the eye could see was a crackling hell of independent rifle-fire, punctuated with the big-drum poundings of artillery and the crashing staccato hoof-beats of retreating cavalry. The big sham battle of the day had started.

And, as though the noise had been a death-knell, ushering Anthony's death-bolt into the defile, two horses' heads appeared that instant in the notch.

Anthony was trembling in every limb. Emmetts, who lay stock still and steady, could feel him quaking. His was the cool nerve of the rifleman, that enables him to keep still when his finger hugs the trigger, but Anthony was nothing but a third-class shot.



ON CAME the horses, with the two-wheeled, two-ton, brakeless water-butt behind them. They breasted the hill, and started down it—to be greeted by a fusillade from half a regiment beside them. It scared them, and brought them up standing, with a jerk. Bang! went the wagon into them, and jerked them forward. Bang-bang went the whippetrees against their hocks. Back went the horses' ears. The driver gripped the reins and threw his weight against them. They reared; and the two-ton wagon, up-tilted by the pole, weighed like a mountain on their backs, and brought them down again—to feel again the banging of the whippetrees. Then in went their toes, the driver yelled, and they started full-pelt down the road together, with their eyes shut and the water-tank bumping and thundering behind them.

"They can't hear it!" hissed Anthony in Emmetts' ear. "D'y'e see, man! They can't hear it! The guns are making too much row! — what a mess there 'll be! Hold on, man! Hey! Come back, you fool!"

But Emmetts was beyond his reach. He snatched at a red, gnarled, knotted wrist. But at that second Emmetts released his hold of a bunch of withes, and dropped scrambling to the roadway, where he landed like a thunderclap in the middle of the unsuspecting crowd.

"Out of the way!" he roared. "Behind

the wagon! Get behind the wagon! There's a runaway coming down the hill! Hurry up!"

He seized one woman and flung her past the wagon. Then he seized the wagon-pole and, exerting all his strength, he dragged it across the road. There was no time to do more than that. In another two seconds the galloping water-tank would be among them.

He had dropped his rifle in the roadway. Now he seized it again, holding it by the foresight end, and ran up the hill—toward the danger.

Down came the horses—eyes shut, frantic, uncontrolled strength gone wild. Their driver, his legs braced hard against the foot-board, his weight and all his strength thrown back against the reins, could just keep them in the middle of the roadway.

He caught sight of Emmetts as they burst round the corner like a mountain boulder, bumping and bounding hell-bent-for-leather over ruts and stones.

"Out of the way!" he yelled. "I can't stop them! Out of the way! Oh, —!" They were upon Emmetts.

But Emmetts side-stepped. He had waited with the butt-end of his rifle raised above his head—poised like a Viking's battle-ax. He had hoped to turn the horses into the ditch, but their eyes were shut, they could not see him. As the driver yelled and the horses reached him, Emmetts sprang aside. His muscles tightened into knots. He stood tiptoed and rigid, with all his brain and nerve and muscle concentrated on the task before him. The rifle twitched, and twirled, and swung. As the near-horse passed him, he brought the butt down with a crash on the blind brute's neck, and broke it.

Down went the near-horse, headlong, back outward. The off-horse tripped against his legs, plunged once, and crashed on top of him. The pole drove nose-forward in

the ground between them, cracked like a pistol-shot and splintered into fragments.

The driver shot head-foremost into the far-side ditch, and the wagon, carried on by impetus and its own enormous weight, crashed into the horses, brought up with a sickening thud and stopped dead.

The near-wheel took Emmetts. His swing of the rifle-butt had been prodigious. He had put all his strength in it, and all his weight, and all his power of balance; and the near-wheel struck him before he could recover. When Anthony dropped down from the bank above, and the crowd came round the wagon to see what had happened, Emmetts lay in the roadway, just behind the water-tank, with both legs broken above the thigh.

"What did you do it for?" demanded Anthony, as they laid him on a wagon-seat in the shade, and stood aside while some one ran for stretcher-bearers and the ambulance. "Why didn't you let it hit them, same as we agreed?"

"What? An' let all them pore 'elpless, sufferin' civilians get 'urt?" demanded Emmetts. "Me? What d'ye take me for?"

Anthony sat by him, with his head between his hands, in silence. It was more than he could understand. He had planned a spectacle and Emmetts had spoiled it. Why?

He was no nearer to an answer when the ambulance arrived, and they picked Emmetts up and laid him in it.

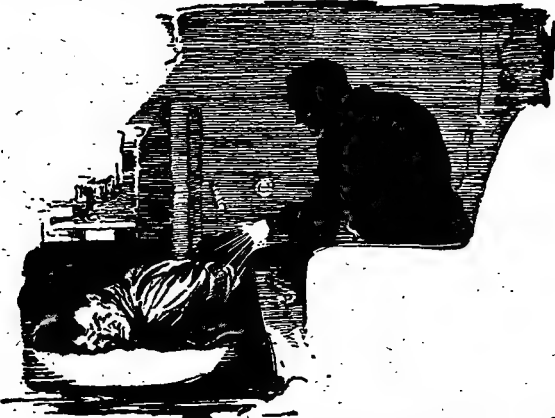
"Can I go with him, sir?" asked Anthony. "His thighs 'urts 'im 'orrid, and 'e'd like to 'ave a pal near 'im."

"All right," said the doctor, and Anthony climbed in. It was then he got his answer.

"And they didn't get 'urt," muttered Emmetts to himself, as the ambulance began to jolt along the road. "Not a bleeding, sufferin' one of 'em. Now if they'd been Tommies——!"



GETTING CATFOOT



by George Vaux Bacon

ELL GREY was police reporter for the *Evening Gazette*, and received seventy-five dollars a week for being able to keep his head when nobody else did. He knew every clergyman, crook, society-woman and demi-mondaine in the city, from the Reverend Mr. Snively to One-Eye Kennedy; from Mrs. Van Waters Elphinston to Aggey Valentine. He was tall, with light-blue eyes, rat-colored hair, a prevalent thirst and a sarcastic tongue.

Otherwise he was an ordinary-looking young man with the single exception of his bright-scarlet ties and check socks.

One Monday at two o'clock he walked into the Reporters' Room at Central, lit a dilapidated corn-cob pipe, put his feet on the desk and watched his "morning-man," Carter, call the telephone-rounds of the ambulances and hospitals.

Dallas and Hawthorn, the two morning-paper men, were at their typewriters, having come in a few moments previously, and were busily grinding out a "rehash" of the morning's news. The other evening-paper reporter and his "morning-man" were out somewhere holding one of those consultations that a second-rate policeman considers part of his job.

Carter hung up the receiver and put on his hat.

"Anything doing?" asked Grey.

"Nothing on the rounds. Catfoot Carson's in town, one of the 'dicks' tells me."

"Which one told you that?"

"McClenahan."

Carter went out, slamming the door after him, hurriedly *en route* to a burlesque matinée for which he had "bummed" a pass.

Grey continued smoking, watching Dallas and Hawthorn pounding out their rewrites, and waiting with patience for them to question him, for he knew that they clicked off the sentences on their typewriters as automatically as their brains were formulating them and had heard every word that had been said.

One of the pleasures of his job was to tease them. City editors told cubs going on police, "Watch Grey and you won't get scooped."

But he was a hard man to watch. He could disappear as suddenly as a phantom and as suddenly reappear in the columns of the *Gazette* with a complete "beat." No one knew how he did it.

No one knew that he learned of the arrival of crooks, as a rule, and what their plans were in the city even before the police learned from their "stool-pigeons" that they were on their way. He did it by a unique organization for interchangeable information

which he and another man had perfected and which they preserved to themselves by being both naturally closemouthed.

The other man was a famous police reporter in Chicago, which is almost in the center of the United States and is actually the center of the "profession" in this country. New York is its transatlantic subsidiary; Frisco its trans-Pacific outlet and New Orleans its port to South and Central America. For many reasons, chief of which is that the laws of King George are too strictly enforced, Canada is pretty well neglected by the gentlemen of the road operating in and about the Republic. The city in which Bill worked is a good "stop-over" between Chicago and New York and has good facilities, both by railroad and ship, for getting away.

The two reporters kept each other in remarkably complete touch as to the movements of all the big crooks to and from and in their respective cities, together with such other information as each deemed might be valuable to the other. They usually mailed their "dope," but on occasion used the wire, for which they had a cipher. Both were adepts at securing underworld information. For five years they had worked together, and neither the crooks themselves, the police nor even their own papers knew anything about their sources of information. The great maxims of the newspaper game—"Keep your promises; keep your mouth shut; protect your news-sources"—were the keystone of their work.

No one even knew that they knew each other.

No one ever knew, either, that they were twin brothers—nor that the great Chicago police reporter was an escaped life-term man for murder from the silent walled city that lies to the east of the Alton tracks in Joliet. A make-up studied for ten years in the meditative silence of a cell effectually prevented that.

Nobody knew, that is, except Catfoot Carson, who had committed the murder.

Hawthorn suddenly whirled around on his chair.

"Say, who is Catfoot Carson?" he asked.

"Why," replied Grey, "he's a chap that for some reason or other has the free run here. A crook, of course. It makes me kind of sore, because I've always been

curious to know what kind of a hitch he's got on the tail of the Chief's goat that the Old Man always lets him get by, and I've never been able to find out. Carter knows it and likes to kid me about it—see?"

Hawthorn looked dubious.

"You can talk more without telling anything when you want to than any man I know, Bill," he said. "I always suspect your answers."

"Don't ask any questions then."

Hawthorn returned to his typewriter and Grey strolled downstairs to look at the "blotter"—the book in which all new arrivals in the "bull-pen" are registered, together with their misdemeanor, age, nationality and residence.

It was an eventful day at Central Station and at six o'clock Grey was free with nothing to do.

As he left the station he was careful to note that none of the other men was following him. On an afternoon paper the morning-turn, from five-thirty to two, is the most important, as that is court-time and is the time when all the police news of the day and of the night before breaks, except about once every six months.

Grey knew that the other men had been suspicious when Carter, scarcely more than a cub, had been put on the morning-turn, and he had been shifted to the afternoon. To their minds it meant that he was following up something "on the outside."

The fact of the matter had been that he had wanted a couple of weeks' rest from the early-morning shift and had succeeded in getting it, so had allowed himself to be followed, much to his own amusement, several times. But this time it was different.

He made sure that there was no one about who knew him before he ducked into a telegraph office and sent a collection of numerals to his brother in Chicago.

II



AN HOUR later, Albert Conkling, who had once been Albert Grey, read:

Catfoot got by you is here first time five years something must be doing our chance at last watch close report quick.

BILL.

Albert Conkling, white-haired and lynx-eyed, caught his breath and for a moment stared, unseeing, before him. He saw the

shame, the cell, the long months of silence in which each minute was a year, the flight, the hiding— Hatred steadied him and calmed his voice as he informed his city editor that he would like a day or two off.

An hour later, a bum entered a saloon on North Clark Street, opposite the City Hall; a saloon in which one can see more slender, beautifully artistic hands than grace the wrists of all the musicians and artists in the world. He bought a schooner of beer and ate a pyramid of free lunch. Later he made one of a general conversation among the "dips" along the bar, in which he was addressed familiarly as Finnanhaddie Fred.

 AT EXACTLY nine-thirty the same night, Bill rang the door-bell of the Chief's house on Centaur Place.

A maid answered it.

"I want to see the Chief, please."

"Who shall I say it is?"

"Say it's Bill Grey of the *Gazette*. That'll be enough."

The maid disappeared and returned almost immediately.

"Chief Stohl will see you in the library, Mr. Grey."

The Chief of Police had a face and jaw like a chunk cut from a granite cliff. Grey had the lean, acquisitive face of a bird of prey.

They looked at each other over the library lamp.

"What is it, Bill?"

"Catfoot Carson is in town."

"Is he? If he is, what of it? He hasn't blown anything, has he?"

The Chief made no effort to deny his acquaintance with the gentleman of the stealthy sobriquet. Grey would have laughed at him if he had. He would have laughed at himself.

Gray put his hands on the table and leaned over the lamp toward the Chief.

"No, he hasn't cracked as much as a walnut so far, for all I know; but you know he isn't here for his health. The last time he was here he got the Earham plate. Do you remember?"

"The plate was returned."

"And Catfoot leaked out of town."

"Well?"

"Well, I want him this time. That's all."

"He hasn't done anything."

"He will, though, and I know you're

watching him. McClenahan's on the job."

The Chief sat down.

"Say, Bill, what's this all about anyhow?"

"Nothing except that you've played on the level with me and I'm coming through on the level with you. I'm going to get Catfoot this time, even if it costs you your job. Get me? I want to give you the tip so you won't say I handed around any double-cross, see?"

Bill had spoken one of the unwritten laws of the man-hunt.

The Chief lolled back in his chair and eyed the reporter speculatively.

"I guess you're kind of getting the swell-head, aren't you, Bill? Who's running the city these days; you and the *Gazette*?"

"Oh, no; the church-members who own the Tenderloin!"

The chief laughed. "If that's all, so-long, Bill. I've got a swell book here I'm reading."

"You'll have a better one to read when you get a chance to take a slant at Catfoot's pedigree on your blotter, Chief. Good night."

"Good night."

The Chief resumed his book with a grunt. He didn't know and didn't care what would become of Catfoot. He only knew that "orders was orders" and that a good policeman gets his pay for obeying them.



LUCK is like a batting-average. It comes to the guy who sticks in the game and keeps his eye on the ball. As Bill lay on his back in bed that evening, three minutes before going to sleep, he stared up through the darkness at the ceiling and mumbled,

"It's my turn at the bat. I can feel it."

Yet he had not taken the slightest trouble even to find out where Catfoot was, nor through what "fence" he intended to operate. But there is such a thing as a nose for news just as there is such a thing as a taste for curry. Both have to be cultivated and, for most people, each is an impossibility. But in some it is instinctive, like Mr. Rockefeller's knowledge of an impending rise in the price of oil.

Grey slept till ten o'clock Tuesday morning, at which time he arose and sat sleepily on the side of his bed, thinking of nothing and hunting mechanically under the bed for his slippers with the big toe of his left foot.

The front door-bell below him rang. A half a minute later there was a knock at his door.

He opened it and a yellow envelope was thrust into his hand. He tore it open. Within was a cipher telegram. With the aid of his key, written on the back of a large visiting card, it read,

Catfoot after Minturn jewels Thursday midnight while family at Charity Ball house left with caretaker. Mrs. Minturn will wear paste copies and leave jewels themselves in safe, second floor, southeast corner house, library. Catfoot half-brother your Mayor. AL.

Bill stared at the last phrase while a gentle smile spread slowly over his face, dispelling the sleepiness thereon into animated concentration. He tore the message into bits, made a bonfire of the pieces in an ash-tray on the chair by the head of his bed and crushed the fragile cinders into the tobacco ashes. Then he shaved and dressed and went to breakfast at a restaurant whose proprietor had been kind in the matter of credit during his cub days.

There he ate his usual breakfast, consisting of a "ham an' egg on a bun," a cream-roll and a large cup of coffee closely resembling the Missouri River in general appearance.

Such a breakfast every morning would have completely demoralized any other stomach in a week. He thrived upon it. A man who can be a police reporter is not made like other men, that's certain.

As he was drinking the awful coffee, he paused suddenly and gazed meditatively into the circle of brown liquid surrounded by its porcelain. He gave a low whistle. One of the other reporters, if he could have heard it, would have muttered, "Low bridge; we're coming to a tunnel!" and followed him like a shadow the rest of the day. It was Bill's famous method of expressing the conception of an idea.



HE PAID his check and walked out of the restaurant, lips pursed in thought. He reported in person to the city editor, a thing that caused interest among the cubs present, for he appeared in the office of the paper itself not more than about once or twice every year, and professed contempt for every one who spent any time in it.

"I've got a tip, Lane, that'll cost you

fifty dollars expense-money," he said to the editor.

Lane wrote out an order on the cashier and handed it to him. Grey was a man who always "produced." When he asked for money he got it. He was worth it.

"Thanks."

"You're welcome."

One of Bill's rules was never to take expense-money from the *Gazette* without delivering the goods it represented; but he considered the actual disposal of the money during the time he was securing the goods as material only for his own knowledge. He disdained turning in itemized expense-items. When he did they would have caused Ananias to commit suicide without waiting for the Lord to save him the trouble.

On this occasion, he spent fifty cents for the materials of an ordinary Y-shaped boys' sling-shot, such as young demons use to make it unpleasant for people with large bay-windows; bought also a box of "chiney" marbles, a pair of nickel-steel handcuffs, a pair of leg manacles and a box of the finest cigars he knew of purchasable for ten cents straight.

These he brought home and put in a valise, the manacles at the bottom, the handcuffs next, the box of "chineys" next and the sling-shot on top.

The rest of the afternoon he spent with newspapers, the cigars and successive high-balls. In the evening he took a quick-lunch waitress he knew to the theater.

Wednesday he slept all morning, telephoning his friend who ran the restaurant to send his breakfast up to him. Breakfast in bed, being as a rule the most utterly unattainable thing for him, he considered the apex of luxury. After breakfast, he read several chapters of Maeterlinck's "The Life of the Bee," which was his curious literary favorite. He claimed that it had more information about human beings in it than anything else that was ever written except advertisements.

He went to bed that night without stirring out of the house, luxuriating riotously in utter laziness, and spent Thursday exactly the same way, up to nine o'clock in the evening. At that hour he dressed himself with the greatest precision, took his valise, checked it at a hotel and went to a couple of moving-picture shows. At eleven he recovered his valise and was at the southeast corner of the Minturn home talking to

O'Malley, the policeman on the beat, by twenty minutes after the hour.

He talked to O'Malley about new regulations for ten minutes, then walked back down the street to the first corner, turned the corner and doubled back in the alley.

Fifteen minutes later he was ensconced behind the tapestry in the Minturn library flanking the safe, the valise open on the floor at his feet.



HE WAITED patiently, without moving a muscle, for thirty-five minutes, in absolute darkness.

At the end of that time, a slight noise, such as one might imagine would be made by the quill of a feather drawn across a pane of glass, attracted his attention. The distant sounds of the city grew slightly louder. A window was opening.

A darker blur appeared in the first window to Grey's left. The shades of all the windows were swiftly pulled down, one after the other. Then the sudden, blinding beam of a pocket flash-light narrowly missed him as he peered out. He pulled in his head, and wondered if Catfoot would look behind the tapestry.

But his luck held. Catfoot, apparently sure of his ground, locked both the doors and satisfied himself with inspecting the room by semicircular sweeps of his light, studiously avoiding the windows. Grey carefully breathed through his nose so as not to attract even the subconscious senses of the thief, whose every perception, he knew, was ground to a fine point by the life of constant watchfulness he lived.

Catfoot returned to the window, where he picked up a packet out of which he drew a long glistening drill. He placed the flash-light in his coat pocket at a slant so that its light fell upon the safe door and, oil-can in one hand, began to rotate the drill swiftly. The bit sank into the nickel-steel of the safe door with the ease of a good ratchet-drill chewing shavings out of a half-inch malleable-iron plate.

There were two outer doors and a jewel compartment in the safe. Through all of these Catfoot bored his way with silent industry.

Grey watched from behind the tapestry with interest. He knew that there were only two drills in the United States that would go through steel like that. A genius in the profession had made the two imme-

diately prior to going up for life for losing his temper and shooting a barkeep four times in the stomach in a dump at Armour Avenue and Twenty-second Street in Chicago. Naturally his secret went up with him. The fact that Catfoot had one showed that he was working for the "Bunch" in Chicago—was doing a syndicate deal, in other words, and not "cracking" on his own account. That meant that, as far as possible, the police were "fixed."

The mate to Catfoot's drill was on exhibition at the central office of the Chicago Detective Bureau, having been found on the person of the inventor when he was arrested.

The small door of the jewel compartment opened. Catfoot put in his hand three times and three times emptied it into the coat pocket opposite the one in which he had stuck the light.

Grey reached into the valise swiftly, produced the sling-shot and a "chinee," silently parted the tapestry, took careful aim and, by the aid of Catfoot's light, with which the latter was now exploring the rest of the safe in the hope of finding more swag, shot the crook neatly on the side of the temple.

As the strong elastic snapped, Catfoot fell on his side with a choking grunt. The flash-light dropped from his hand, the flash-button locked, sending a stream of light along the carpet toward Grey, who leaped to his feet with the handcuffs and manacles and, seizing the flash-light, had the prostrate Catfoot securely bound within thirty seconds. Then he sat down and waited for his victim to come to, which Catfoot did in a short time, cursing violently and struggling to free himself.

Grey turned the flash-light on his own face.

"Grey!" gasped Catfoot.

The reporter leaned over, jerked the revolver from Catfoot's pocket and shoved it up against his nose.

"The same, Catfoot. Take a look into the little black tunnel for a while. When the whistles blow at one o'clock for the night-shift men to go back to work, I'm going to blow your dirty brains right into the fabric of that expensive rug you're lying on. It'll probably ruin the design of the rug; but I'll be willing to pay for it."

For ten minutes Catfoot stared into the

muzzle of his own revolver, then rolled over on his face.

"I can't look at it," he said.

"Who murdered Jim Callahan, Catfoot?"

Catfoot snarled up at his captor and tormentor like a weasel at bay.

"You know — well who did."

"You bet I do. Now, you rat-faced little skunk, I'm going to tell you what terms you can make, see? You can have either a chance for freedom through the courts by being tried for the murder of Jim Callahan, or hell in thirty minutes. It's about half-past twelve now. Which do you want?"

"I'll take a chance in the court-room."

Grey laughed a low laugh that sounded much like the hiss of a snake coiling around its prey. He stuck his face almost against the prostrate thief's.

"You know what I'd like to do? I'd like to reach down and grab your lying tongue and throw it over there in the corner in the dust!" His face was contorted into an expression of hate that was a fiendish thing to see.

Catfoot covered his eyes with his manacled hands.

"Gee, you've got me down; lemme alone, will you?"

Grey grinned down at him diabolically.

"Catfoot Carson, the slickest dip and tincracker in the game, eh? Got one of Blue Nose's famous drills, too! Caught right on the job by a penny-a-line reporter; cheap stuff, Catfoot, cheap stuff. The Bunch would certainly hand you a cool invitation to take a trip down to Australia and forget yourself if they ever were to hear of this. But it'll be a nice, quiet cell for yours with gentlemanly warders to feed you imported cigarettes and caviar."

Catfoot vomited a volley of wild oaths and, rolling over on his stomach again, bit the rug. But it might have been to hide a laugh—once down at the Station and the jewels given up— He knew the instructions that were there regarding him.

Grey laughed softly. He leaned over and pulled the drill and a necklace of diamonds, which he knew to be the famous Minturn \$200,000 necklace, out of Catfoot's pocket. He calmly put them into his own.

"When you get down to the Station, Catfoot," he said, "this necklace, naturally, will be missing."

Catfoot stared at him.

"It's in my pocket, see? But you'll keep

your flap closed about what happened to it or I'll let the paper and the prosecuting attorney know about that little yellow-haired girl you strangled to death in Blanche Morton's place in Frisco last year—do you remember that night, Catfoot? You had been drinking a lot of those new highballs you had heard about in Philadelphia. But that doesn't excuse in California, you know. She was such a pretty little girl too—such blue eyes, that rolled up and showed the whites—"

"Stop!" Catfoot writhed on the floor, suddenly sweating.

On a table in a corner of the library stood a telephone. Grey abruptly went to it and sat down.

"That's all, Catfoot," he said. "You thought I had fallen asleep for five years, didn't you?" He laughed gently, picked up the receiver, laid the revolver on the table and, keeping the flash-light on Catfoot, who was watching him malignantly, called, "Valley 4000."

All of their conversation had been carried on in strained whispers. It was with the same caution that Grey called the night-man of the *Gazette*.



"HELLO, Jones. Is that you? Oh, all right. Say, I am at Crocus 4688. If I'm interrupted, send the police at once to the Minturn house at Fifty-second and Aldale, then call me back at the number I gave you till some one answers, see? Get a head-receiver and a typewriter and I'll give you a story."

There was a pause.

"All right," came over the wire.

Grey dictated:

"Catfoot Carson, alias Menominee Pete, alias Harry Burns, was caught by the *Gazette* police reporter at midnight to-night as he was in the act of escaping from the Minturn house with Mrs. Minturn's famous jewels. The ones Mrs. Minturn wore at the Charity Ball at the time the attempt at the robbery was made were imitation ones, she having thought it safer to leave the real ones at home in the safe under the care of the house caretaker, who was asleep when the robbery was committed.

"The thief is a half-brother of the Mayor, and owing to that has been allowed immunity by the police on orders from the Mayor so far, although he was the man who got away with the famous Earldam

plate, which was mysteriously returned, five years ago. On that occasion, as on several before it, Carson's relationship to the Mayor saved him from actual imprisonment.'

"Add anything you want to that, Jones. Call up the police and have the patrol sent here. Call up the managing-editor, too. We'll want a red-hot editorial on municipal graft and so on, to go with this story. Oh, by the way, add this to the story:

"The famous \$200,000 necklace, which was the most famous item in the magnificent collection of Minturn jewels, has mysteriously disappeared and Carson, the thief, refuses to divulge its location. It is thought he succeeded, in some remarkable way, in hiding it where he, or another, in case of his conviction, will know where to find it.'

"That's all. Don't forget to call up the patrol and send it here and also get the editor."

He hung up the receiver. As he did so, Catfoot shot him a quick look.

Catfoot was sure that Grey knew but very little about the actual "dope" on the Callahan murder. It had been committed in such a way that only his own pals were wise.

"If I shut up about the necklace, you'll promise to stick to the Callahan charge and not bring up that—that Frisco story, won't you, Grey?" he asked.

"I will," said Bill.

Catfoot knew that the Greys kept their words. Nothing so impresses itself on the criminal mind as that one characteristic in a man. He was satisfied on that point. He asked another question.

"What do you know about the Callahan mess, Grey?"

Bill looked at him coolly and, producing a box of cigarettes and some matches, lit a "pill" and blew a ring of smoke toward the ceiling before replying. Then, with the air of a boob as green as the grass that grows by the river-bank, he replied,

"I can prove that you murdered him with a blackjack in the cellar of Greek Mike's place at Columbus Road and West Twelfth on the night of October the third, fifteen years ago. Does that satisfy you?"

"Sure," said Catfoot.

It did. Catfoot knew he could prove that he had been in South Bend on that night. With Grey keeping his word on the necklace deal, he would be able to get

through a trial easily. Metaphorically speaking, he laughed up his sleeve.

What he unfortunately did not know nor think of was that Grey had lied, deliberately and with perfect grace.

Nor did he know that Grey had waited a long time to give each of certain three men one hundred dollars for testifying to the fact that they saw Catfoot stab Callahan with a carving-knife in a dump on East Thirty-first Street on the second of October, fifteen years before—one day before Catfoot could prove that he had been in South Bend.

Grey turned to the telephone again and called another number.

"Hello, Kid," he said over the phone, "come on down to Central in half an hour. There's something doing."

"Who did you call then?" asked Catfoot, taking a brotherly interest, now, in the proceedings.

"Oh, just my assistant on police," said Grey.

Catfoot was so tickled with the greenness of the man whom he had supposed was his one deadly enemy that he entered the patrol-wagon cheerfully, greeting one of the cops with a jaunty air of long friendship.

When they arrived at the Station, the Chief was waiting for them.

"What you doin' here, Bill?" he asked.

"I came down to bet you fifty dollars that Catfoot goes up for life. Are you on?"

"You're crazy. Do you really mean that?"

"Surest thing you know."

"I'm on. I hate to take your money; but I need a new uniform."

"All right, let's go over and watch the examination."



CATFOOT was examined in the Chief's office, where the assembled two or three patrolmen wondered at the wonderful gems that were extracted from his pockets, one after the other, in ropes and bursts of scintillating glory. When everything had been taken out and the Sergeant was just about to order Catfoot to the bull-pen, while the Chief held the gems, grinning, knowing that in the morning they would be sent back secretly to Mrs. Minturn and that Catfoot would be arraigned in court on a vagrancy charge and let go, Grey asked,

"Say, Chief, where's the \$200,000 necklace?"

"What?" asked the Sergeant.

"Why, the \$200,000 necklace—the most valuable thing in the whole collection." He looked from one policeman to the other with splendidly simulated alarm. "You fellows don't mean to say that you didn't find it in his pockets!"

"Naw, we didn't," said one of the patrolmen. "How do you know it ain't in the safe yet?"

"Because I saw him take it out, that's why. You'd better go back and look around for it."

"Go ahead, Pat," said the Chief to one of the men. "You and Tom go back and look the place over carefully."

He turned to Catfoot.

"How about it, Catfoot?" he asked.

Catfoot refused to answer, and the story Grey had written twenty minutes before became a true one.

As the Chief was repeating the question over and over and threatening the obdurate Catfoot, who, remembering the murder in Frisco, kept an absolute silence, three men sauntered into the office. One of them glanced at Catfoot, who at the moment had his back turned, with a grin.

"Hello, Catfoot," he said, "don't you remember me?"

"Jerry the Tailor!" cried Catfoot!

"The same, Catfoot, old scout," said Jerry, "and Black Mike and the Sleepy Kid is with me. Shake hands, fellers."

As the Chief watched with narrowed eyes, and Grey smoked his cigarette with a sardonic smile, Catfoot turned deathly white and held out a slightly trembling hand. Grey's "chiney" had hit him a pretty hard blow.

"Why are you guys here?" asked Catfoot nervously.

"Why we just dropped in to talk to the Chief about old Jim Callahan. Do you remember old Jim, Catfoot?" asked Black Mike.

Catfoot stared at the three men in silence.

"D' yuh remember how he wriggled when yuh stuck him in the belly with that carvin'-knife, Catfoot, old kid?" added the Sleepy Kid.

Catfoot looked at Grey. The crook's eyes were suddenly rimmed with red.

"You——!" he started, and suddenly began to cry. His nerve was gone. Grey had got his goat.

He never opened his mouth about anything, and went to the pen for life. Grey knew that he would not dare say a word; for only the coward prefers the cell to death, the knife to the revolver, and will murder a woman. The conviction in California would have meant death.

When the verdict was returned, on motion of the prosecuting attorney in the case, Albert Grey was officially pronounced by the Court innocent of the murder of Jim Callahan.

After court had adjourned the same day, Bill paid each of his three stool-pigeons a one-hundred-dollar bill, wired his brother and returned to the Police Station, where he found the Chief.

"You owe me fifty dollars, Chief," he said.

The Chief reluctantly pulled out the money and handed it to him.

"You ought to pay it back to me, Bill," he said. "The Mayor says that story of yours lost him the reelection and that probably means my job; Minturn has been simply raising——over that necklace and we haven't been able to find a trace of it."

"That so?" queried Bill.

He looked the Chief straight in the eye.

"Say, Chief, if I were to hand you something that would shut up Minturn's mouth, would you be willing to take all the credit for yourself and the Department and forget where it came from?"

The Chief in turn eyed the reporter for a minute steadily.

"Is my word good?"

"It's good," said Bill.

"You've got it," said the Chief.

Bill produced the Minturn necklace from his inner vest pocket and laid it in the Chief's palm. The Chief stared at it, fascinated by the glittering fortune he held. Presently he said slowly,

"The 'profession' lost a good one in you, Bill. You'd better watch out; it'll get you some day."

"Oh, I've got too much respect for the police for that!" said Bill.



THE TALE-TELLER

by Edgar Wallace

A BIBOO told Sanders that an Arabi had come to see him, and Arabs are rare on the coast, though certain dark men of Semitic origin have that honorary title.

Sanders came out to his stoop expecting to find a Kano and was surprised to see, squatting by the edge of the raised veranda, a man of true Moorish type. He sat with his hands about his knees wrapped in a spotless white *djellab*.

"You are from Morocco," said Sanders in Arabic, "or from Dacca."

The man nodded.

"The people of Dacca are dogs," he said, in the singsong voice of a professional storyteller. "One man, who is a cousin of my mother's, stole twenty *douros* from my house and went back to Dacca by a coast-boat before I could catch him and beat him. I hope he is killed and all his family also. *Bismallah*. God is good."

Sanders listened, for he knew the Tangier people for great talkers.

The man went on. "Whether a man be of the Ali or Sufi sect, I do not care. There are thieves of both kinds."

"Why do you come here?" asked Sanders.

"Once I knew a man who sat in the great *sok*," Sanders let him tell his story in his own way. "And all the country people who brought vegetables and charcoal to the market would kiss the edge of his *djellab* and give him a penny.

"There was not a man in Tangier who had not kissed the edge of his *djellab* and given him five *centimos* except me.

"One day when the sun was very hot, the Haj beckoned me and I went nearer to him and sat on the ground before him. He looked at me, saying no word, only stroking his long white beard slowly. For a long, long time he sat like this, his eyes searching my soul.

"My son," he said at last, 'how are you called?'

"Abdul Azrael," I replied.

"Abdul," he said, 'many come to me bringing me presents, yet you never come.'

"Before God and his prophet," I swore, 'I am a poor man who often starves. I have no friends.'

"All that you tell me are lies," said the holy man, then he was silent again.

"Do you say your prayers, Abdul?" he asked.

"Four times every day," I replied.

"You shall say your prayers four times a day, but each day you shall say your prayers in a new place!"

The man paused impressively.

"Well-favored and noble master," he said, "from that day I have wandered through the world, praying in new places, for I am cursed by the holy man because I lied to him, and there is that within me which impels me. And, lord, I have wandered from Damaraland to Mogador, and

from Mogador to Egypt and from Egypt to Zanzibar."

"Very pretty," said Sanders. "You have a tongue like honey and a voice like silk, and it is written in the Sura of the Djinn, 'Truth is rough and a lie comes smoothly. Let him pass whose speech is pleasing.'"

Sanders was not above taking liberties with the Koran, as this quotation testifies.

"Give him food," said Sanders to his orderly; "later I will send him on his way."



A LITTLE later the Commissioner crossed over to the police lines, and interrupted the Housa Captain at his studies—Captain Hamilton had a copy of "Squire's Companion to the British Pharmacopœia" open before him and he was reading up Arsenic: (1) As a cure for intermittent fever; (2) As an easy method of discharging himself from the monotony of a coast existence.

Sanders comprehended the study at a glance and grinned.

"If you do not happen to be committing suicide for an hour or so," he said, "I should like to introduce you to the original Wandering Jew from Tangier."

The Captain closed his book with a bang, lit a cigarette and carefully extinguished the match.

"This," he said, addressing the canvas ceiling of his hut, "is either the result of overwork, or the effect of fishing in the sun without proper head-protection."

Sanders threw himself into a long-seated chair and felt for his cheroots.

Then, ignoring the Housa's insult, he told the story of Abdul Azrael, the Moor.

"He's a picturesque mendicant," he said, "and has expressed his intention of climbing the river and crossing Africa to Uganda."

"Let him climb," said the Housa. "From what I know of your people he will teach them nothing in the art of lying. He may, however, give them style, and they stand badly in need of that."

Abdul Azrael accordingly left headquarters by the store-canoe which carried Government truck to the Isisi villages.

There was a period of calm on the river. Sanders found life running very smoothly.

Once he ran up the river to settle a bigger palaver than the new king of the Akasava could decide upon, but that was the only break in the monotony.

Sanders finished his palaver with the Akasava, and left the Akasava city at sunset, traveling by night for his own convenience. The river hereabout is a real river, there being neither sand-bank nor shoal to embarrass the steersman. At five o'clock he passed Chumbiri.

He had no reason to believe that all was not well at Chumbiri, or cause to give it anything but a passing glance. He came downstream in the gray of dawn and passed the little village without suspicion. He saw from the bridge of the *Zaire* the dull glow of a fire on the distant foreshore—he was in mid-stream and here the river runs two miles wide from bank to bank. Day came with a rush. It was little better than twilight when he left the village to starboard. Long before he came to the sharp bend which would hide Chumbiri from view, the world was flooded with strong light.



ONE acquires the habit of looking all ways in wild Africa. It was, for example, a matter of habit that he cast one swift glance backward to the village, before he signaled to the helmsman, with a slight bend of his head, to bring the helm hard aport. One swift glance he threw and frowned. The tiny town was clearly to be seen. Three straight rows of huts, on a sloping bank, with *isisi* palms running the length of each street.

"Turn about," he said, and the steersman spun the wheel.

The little steamer listed over as the full power of the swift current caught her amidships, then she slowly righted and the waters piled themselves up at her bows as she breasted the current again.

"Abiboo," said Sanders to his sergeant, "I see no people in the streets of this village, neither do I see the smoke of fires."

"Lord, they may go hunting."

"Fishermen do not hunt," said Sanders, "nor do women and old people."

Abiboo did not advance the preposterous suggestion that they might sleep, for if the men were sluggards they would not be sufficiently lost to shame to allow their womenfolk to escape their duties.

Sanders brought the steamer into slack water near the beach and none came to meet him.

There was no dog or goat within sight—only the remains of a big fire still smoldered upon the beach.

His men waded ashore with their hawsers and secured the steamer, and Sanders followed.

He walked through the main street and there was no sign of life. He called sharply. There was no response. Every hut was empty. The cooking-pots, the beds—every article of necessity was in its place. The rough mills for the grinding of corn stood before the huts, the crude N'gombi axes for the cutting of timber, the N'gombi spades—all these things were in evidence; but of the people young or old, man or woman or child, well or sick, there was no trace. The only living being he saw was Abdul Azrael. He came upon that pious man on a sheltered beach near the village. His praying-carpet was spread and he faced toward Mecca in rapt contemplation.

Sanders waited for the prayers to finish and questioned him.

"Lord, I have seen nothing," he said, "but I will tell you a story. Once——"

"I want no stories," snapped Sanders.

He put the nose of the steamer across the river. Exactly opposite was Fezembini, a larger town and, since constant communication was maintained between the two places, some explanation of the people's absence might be secured.

Fezembini was alive and bustling, and all that could walk came down to the beach to say "O ail!" to the Commissioner, but Mondomi, the chief, had no solution.

He was a tall, thin man, with a thin curl of beard on his chin.

"Lord, they were there last night," he said, "for I heard their drums beating and I saw their fires; also I heard laughter and the rattle of the dancers' little cages."*

"H'm," said Sanders.

He pursued his inquiries at neighboring villages, but was no nearer a satisfactory explanation of the vanishing of three hundred people at the end of his investigation.

He sat down in the cool and quiet of his cabin to reason the matter out. The Chumbiri folk were as law-abiding as Akasava people can be; they had paid their taxes; there was no charge against any of them; yet of a sudden they had left their homes and gone into the forest. That they had not made for the river was evident from the discovery of their canoes, carefully docked in a convenient creek.

*A sort of wickerwork dumb-bell containing stones—not unlike a double-headed baby's-rattle.

"I give it up," said Sanders. He had got to headquarters for a day or two. When he had finished his work there he returned to Chumbiri and its problem.

The people had not returned, nor had any of the spies news of them.

He sent Abiboo into the forest to find their trail, and the Housa sergeant had no difficulty, for two miles into the forest he found an old man who had died by the way, and a little farther he found an old woman, also dead.

Sanders went out to see the bodies. There was no sign of wound or injury. They had obviously died from fatigue.

"When daylight comes we will follow," said Sanders. "I will take ten men, and you will choose swift walkers."

He snatched a few hours' sleep, and before dawn Abiboo brought him the cup of tea without which Sanders never began a day.

Sanders, who had not an ounce of superfluous flesh, was an indefatigable walker, and the party covered twelve miles before noon—no easy task, for the forest path was little more than a grass track. The party rested through the three hot hours of the day and resumed its journey at three o'clock.

They came upon a camping-place with the ashes of the fires hardly cold and two newly made graves to testify to the fate of age and infirmity suddenly called upon for an effort.

At nine o'clock that night, just when Sanders was considering the advisability of camping, he saw the light of fires ahead and pushed on.

There were many young trees which hid the view of the camp, and the party had to take a circuitous route to reach the clearing where the people were.



IT WAS an extraordinary scene which met the eyes of our dumfounded Commissioner.

Line upon line of kneeling forms were revealed by the light of the fires.

They faced in one direction and, as they swayed backward and forward, one knelt in advance, whom Sanders had no difficulty in recognizing as the chief head-man.

"Lala is great!" he sang.

"O cala!" droned his people.

"Lala is high!"

"O cala!" they repeated, and bowed their heads.

The chief did not see Sanders, because Sanders came up behind him. He knew that Sanders was there, because Sanders kicked him very hard.

"Get up, O foolish man!" said Sanders.

He did not use those exact words, because he was very annoyed, but whatever he said had the desired effect.

"Now you shall tell me," said Sanders, "why you are so much bigger a fool than I ever thought you were."

"Lord," said the chief humbly, "we go to seek new lands, for an Arabi taught us that we should pray in a certain way, and that if we prayed in a different place every night, great blessings would come to us—"

A light dawned on Sanders.

"We will go back to-morrow," he said, after swallowing something in his throat, "and I will take my steamer and search for this Arabi."

Two days brought him to the village. He left the judgment of the chief to another day and hurried aboard.

As the *Zaire* was casting off, that wobegone individual came running to the beach.

"Master," he gasped, "we ask justice!"

"You shall have it," said Sanders grimly.

"Lord, all our homes are stolen, nothing is left."

Sanders swore at him fluently in a language which allows considerable opportunities for such exercise.

"Speak quickly, father of monkeys."

"Lord, they are gone," said the agitated head-man, "all our good pots and our mills, our spears, our hatchets and our fishing-lines."

"Why did you leave them, O father of tom-cats?" said Sanders in exasperation.

"The Arabi told us," said the head-man, "and we did that which we thought was best."

Sanders leaned on the rail and spoke to the man.

They were not words of kindness and cheer nor words of hope or comfort. Sanders drew upon forest and river for his illustrations. He told the head-man all about his life and sketched his existence after death. He referred to his habits, his morals and his relations. He spoke feelingly of his head, his feet and his bodily infirmities, and the interested Housas on the *Zaire* drew closer lest one word should escape them.

"And now," said Sanders in conclusion, "I call all men to witness that you and your people are bushmen."

"O Kol!" said the horrified villagers, who had come to the beach at the heels of their head-man, for "bushman" is the very summit of insults.

"Bushmen!" repeated Sanders bitterly, as the boat drifted from the shore, "root-eaters, who talk with monkeys in their own language. . . ."

He left the people of the village considerably depressed.

First he crossed the river to Fezembini.

Yes, the chief had seen the Arabi, had indeed rented to him two large canoes and six paddlers to each.

"He said he was of the Government, lord, on secret service," said the chief, "and desired to collect the things which the people of Chumbiri had left behind them."

These canoes had gone up-river and they had some six days' start of the Commissioner.



SANDERS lost no time. From a coop which was erected aft he took two pigeons. One had a red and the other a tiny blue band about its leg. He wrote identical messages on sheets as thin in texture as a cigarette paper and bound them to the legs of the birds. One pigeon he released, and that went north. He waited till it was out of sight, then he let the other go. That went north also, but a point or two west of its fellow.

Sanders sent the *Zaire* in the same general direction. Later in the afternoon he reached the Akasava city.

"What strangers have been here?" he asked the hastily summoned chief.

"Master, no stranger," said the chief, "save only the new Arabi, whom your lordship has sent to sell us pots and knives."

Sanders gripped the rail of the boat, not trusting himself to speak.

"He sold you pots?" he asked chokingly.

"And spears," said the chief, "and many desirable things, and they were very cheap and all the people praised you, master, that you had done this kindness. For thus said the Arabi: 'Our lord Sandi desires that you should pay only a little for these precious articles—he himself has paid me, that I should benefit you.'"

"Anything else?"

The chief hesitated.

"Lord, he told us a story about a certain evil devil who tormented the ungrateful, and my people were frightened lest they did not accept the benefits your lordship offered and——"

"Cast off," roared Sanders.

Naked men jumped into the shallow water and waded ashore to where the wire hawsers were fastened.

"As for you," said Sanders to the chief, "go tell your master the king that he has set up a child as chief of this city. For when was I so mad that I gave gifts to lazy people? Have I sickness that I should pay a thiefing Arabi money to benefit evil and foolish men?"

"Lord," said the chief simply, "knowing you were a mean and cruel man we felt great joy, thinking that gods had touched your hard heart."

Sanders looked round for something to throw at him, for time was precious.

He found only valuable things and allowed the matter to drop.

At a village ten miles away he found further evidence of the Moor's perfidy. Here the praying pilgrim had rested for a night and had "borrowed" three bags of salt, some dried fish and a store of manioc. He had done this in the name of the Government.

"And gave me," said the wizened headman, "a book with devil-marks."

He handed a paper to Sanders.

It was in Arabic, and the Commissioner read it with some emotion:

From Abdul Azrael, the servant of God, the one, true, beneficent and merciful.

To the giaour Sanders, whom may God preserve and lead to the true faith.

Peace be on your house. This is written on the fourth day of the third week following Ramazan:

I go to my brethren who live beyond the Cataracts of the great River. I pray for you; therefore pay these people for all that I have taken.

Sanders read it again.

If Abdul took the river which passes the Ochori and turned sharply to the right into the creek of Bamboo he would come in time to the Arab settlements which were beyond the Commissioner's jurisdiction. Moreover, he would be beyond his reach, for the *Zaire* drew a fathom and a half of water, and the creek of Bamboos averaged half a fathom.

"Did this Arabi say which way he would go?" asked Sanders.

The old man nodded.

"By the Ochori country, lord," he said, and Sanders groaned, "and he asked what manner of people the Ochori were."

"And what said you?" asked Sanders, interested.

"I said they were fools," said the headman, "and very fearful."

"And how long have you sat in this village?" asked Sanders.

"Lord, I was born here and here I have lived."

There was a twinkle in the eyes of Mr. Commissioner Sanders. This old man had never heard of Bosambo the chief. Suppose Abdul yielded to temptation and arrested his flight at the city of that great man?



ABDUL AZRAEL came to the Ochori village singing a song. He was cheerful because a few miles up the river was a crocodile creek, broad enough and deep enough for a fast canoe, but having neither the depth nor the width for a steamer such as the *Zaire*.

He had intended going straight to his hiding-place, but judged very shrewdly that so far he had a day the better of the chase.

It would have been wiser of him to continue his journey, but this he did not know. He was in high spirits, for a few hours before he had sold one of the canoes he had borrowed to a N'gombi chief, who had, moreover, paid him in Frankies.*

In various portions of his attire Abdul Azrael secreted the results of many pilgrimages. He had dirty Turkish notes, golden coins of Tunis, English sovereigns, marks, twenty-peseta pieces, heavy golden eagles from a land he had never seen, not a few black-and-chocolate hundred-franc notes of the *Bank Nationale de Belgique* (these he had come by on the Congo), to say nothing of the silver coinage of dubious quality which the Shereefian Government issues at odd moments.

He strutted through the main street of the Ochori city and came before Bosambo.

"Peace be upon your house," he said; and Bosambo, who had a working knowledge of Arabic, bade him welcome.

"I have come from Sandi, our lord," said Abdul gravely. "He has sent me with

*The franc was the only coinage known in Sanders' territory, and that only on the upper river. It came from the adjoining French territory.

these words, 'Give unto Abdul Azrael the best of your hospitality and regard him as me.'"

"I am Sandi's dog," said Bosambo, "though he is, as you know, my half-brother of another mother."

"This he has often told me," said Abdul.

They exchanged compliments for twenty minutes, at the end of which time the Moor excused himself.

"For I must say my prayers," he said.

"I also will say my prayers," said Bosambo promptly, "according to my custom, and I thank Allah that you are here that I may pray in peace."

Abdul had been on the point of telling his story of the Holy Man of Tangier, but stopped.

"That is strange talk," he said, "for there is one custom as there is one God. And all men pray in peace."

Bosambo shook his head sadly.

"I live among thieves," he said, "and I am a rich man. It is the custom in this part of the country to remove all clothes, placing them before the door of the dwelling, then to enter the hut and pray."

"That is a good custom," said Abdul eagerly. "It is one I have often practised."

"Yet," Bosambo went on, "how may a believer go about his proper business? For if I leave my clothes, with all my precious jewels concealed, my people would rob me."

"Bismallah!" cried the pious Moor, "this is a happy day, for we will pray together, you and I. And while I am at my prayers you shall guard my robes, and while you are at your prayers, behold, I will be Azrael, the Angel of the Sword, and none shall touch your jewels by my life."

It is said that they embraced, Abdul in the excess of his emotion running his deft fingers lightly over the other's waist, noting certain bulky protuberances which were unknown to nature.

"I will pray first," said Abdul, "and I will pray for a long time."

"I also will take a long time," said the simple Bosambo.

Abdul stripped to his under robe, collected his *djellab* and his long gabardine into a

convenient bundle, placed them on the ground before the hut and entered.



SANDERS arrived six hours later, and Bosambo awaited him.

"Lord," said the chief, "the Arabi I have arrested as your lordship directed, for your pigeon was a cunning one and came swiftly, though there are many hawks."

"Where is he?" asked Sanders.

"He is in my hut," said Bosambo, "and, master, deal gently with him, because he is of my faith; also, he is a little mad."

"Mad?"

Bosambo nodded his close-cropped head.

"Mad, master," he said sadly, "for he says I have robbed him, taken from him such as gold and book money—a large fortune."

Sanders eyed him keenly.

"Did you?" he asked.

"Lord," said Bosambo with simple dignity, "he was my guest and of my faith. How could I rob him?"

Sanders's interview with the wrathful Moor was not a protracted one.

"I send you to labor in the Village of Irons for a year," he said, "for you are a liar, a thief and a maker of mischief."

"I will go to your prison, lord," said Abdul, "but tell this black man to restore the money he has stolen from me. Lord, it was hidden in my clothes and by a trick——"

"That is not my palaver," said Sanders shortly.

The Housas were marching the Moor away when he turned to Bosambo.

"After I come from the Village of Irons," he said, "I will come to you, Bosambo, thou infidel and eater of pig. And——"

Bosambo waved his hand with an airy gesture.

"You will never come from the Village of Irons," he said, "for Sandi, who is my cousin, has told me secretly that you will be poisoned. As to the money, I think you are an evil liar."

"Six hundred Spanish dollars!" hissed Abdul.

"Four hundred and a half of a hundred," corrected Bosambo blandly, "and much of the silver breaks when you bite it. Go in peace, O my angel!"

CAMPBELL AN' ME AN' THE B'AR

by Frank Houghton



CAMPBELL an' me had jest finished our shack on the Moyie, in British Columbia, an' was restin' after it for a spell. I mind, too, we was kind o' fed up with each other's company an' was arguin', when in walked the Kickin'-Hawse-Kid.

"Howdy-do, gentlemen," said the Kid, takin' a seat on a empty nail-keg an' fannin' hisself with his hat, the weather bein' ter'ble sultry that August.

"Howdy-do, Kid," said the both o' us, kind o' relieved at the sight o' him.

"What's the latest news?" said Campbell.

"Thar ain't none," said the Kid gloomily, "none whatever."

"An' folks call this 'ere country a land o' plenty," says Campbell, kind o' ruminatin'. Maybe I best tell you right now Campbell was a Scotchman, which explains most anything.

"Plenty o' what?" said the Kid, kind o' snortin' an' beginnin' to take off his spurs.

But Campbell didn't make no reply, jest kind o' relapsed into silence. Kid says most Scotchmen's like that.

The Kid set still for a consid'ble spell after that, jest a fannin' himself an' sayin' nothin', then says he, speakin' slow an' thoughtful:

"Has either o' you two boys got a sort o' hankerin' love of adventure away down deep in your system?"

Campbell he didn't say nothin' at that, nothin' whatever.

Then, seein' as Campbell wasn't goin' to speak, I answered a bit cautious:

"It depends, Kid, what kind o' a lay you're on: placer or quartz, driftin' or sinkin'?"

The Kid laughed consid'ble at that an' says he,

"Dan, old socks, whar was you raised?"

"Away down East," says I, crackin' a laugh as I spoke, "in a bit o' a village called New York, half a dozen shacks an' a main trail. I mind a piece o' advice a school-ma'am give me when I was about the height o' a strikin' hammer. 'Dan,' says she one day, takin' hold o' my ear with one of her hands an' twistin' it consid'ble, 'Dan, my boy, thar's a old sayin' I want to knock into that fat head o' yours,' an' with that she smacked me on the other ear till I hollered, 'Look before you lep,

Dan," says she. An' I ain't never forgot her advice, Kid. An' if you don't mind me sayin' so, Kid, you wouldn't be a little bit worse off yourself if you was to take it occasional. How about Miuke's steer?"

The kid gave a queer kind o' a sidelong look when I mentioned the steer, an' quit laughin'. Meanwhile Campbell smoked on very peaceful.

"Dan," said the Kid, "you ain't a quarter the fool you look."

"Kid," said Campbell, takin' the pipe from his mouth an' polishin' it on his sleeve; "what's the lay?"

"B'ars," said the Kid.

"B'ars?" said Campbell.

"B'ars!" said I.

The Kid nodded.

"Thar ain't much money in b'ars now," said Campbell.

"Thar's consid'ble sport," said the Kid.

"It depends," said I.

I'd seen grizzlies before. I'd seen 'em up on the mountains about the snow-line, an' I jedged from what I'd seen o' them that I could live without 'em. They didn't strike me as no ways attractive. I hadn't seen many o' them, two, or maybe three, but they always made me feel small, an' mean, an' homesick, an' I generally made camp a sight earlier them nights.

"What kind o' a rifle have you, anyway?" asked the Kid.

"A .50-110 Winchester," said I.

"A what?" said the Kid.

"A .50-110," said I again.

"Jumpin' maniacs! Elephants ain't any ways plentiful in these hills, Dan, be they?"

"I ain't huntin' no elephants," said I.

"What kind of a b'ar was it?" Campbell asked.

"I didn't rightly see," said the Kid, "I was in a hurry when I come on it."

A kind o' comical idee took a holt o' me jest then an' I begun laughin'.

"Funny, ain't it?" said the Kid.

"'Tain't near as funny as what it would 'a' b'en, if you'd started in examin'in' it, Kid."

"I once knew a man——" the Kid began.

"Where did you see it?" Campbell asked.

"Where the teepee-poles are, at the foot of the lake, among the saskatoon-bushes."

"Did you scare it, Kid?"



THE Kid shook his head. He stayed for a little while after that an' give us his idees on furnishin', an' told us of some pink-an'-light-blue flannel he'd seen at Fort Steele which he said'd look more tasty for curtains than the gunny-sacks we'd nailed up. He said it'd give a more high-toned look to the room, kind o' light it up. He had sure some ter'ble fine notions on house-decoratin' the Kid had.

"What I like," said he, "is a room that makes you feel rested an' kind o' elevated, a room where you can loaf round in your socks without no danger o' runnin' slivers into your feet or twistin' your ankles by steppin' into the cracks. Consid'ble comfort in a room, no doubt, depends on a roof. Look at the one on Hank Aller's shack, for instance. Whar'd you find a better shack in fine weather? But when it rains—my soul! You'd want gum boots an' slickers an' umbrellys to keep anywhere near dry, an' you wouldn't be dry then. That ain't my notion o' comfort at all. An' I tell you, right now, it's painful to watch Hank durin' a wet spell, an' listen to his remarks on this-here land o' plenty. What's give him that cough o' his if it ain't bein' wet s'often? No, the kind o' room you want is one that don't let in over an' above much rain, an' has pictures hung round. I tell you thar ain't nothin' to touch pictures for elevatin' a man's taste."

"I knew a man once," said Campbell, buttin' in, "as owned a picture o' the flood, photygraph he said it was, with Moses, I think it was Moses, settin' with some o' his wives in a punt, fishin'. Nice little family scene. I mind one o' the ladies was sewin' a button on his weskit, I think it was. I guess things, or maybe it was the weather, had kind o' upset Moses, or perhaps he wasn't havin' no partic'lar sport. Whatever it was, he was lookin' kind o' cross-eyed at one o' the womenfolks. It was rainin', too, somethin' outrageous, an' thar wasn't an umbrella in the outfit."

"Them Bible tales is sure fascinatin'," said the Kid thoughtfully. "But as I was goin' to say, if you had them pink-an'-blue curtains I seen at Carlin an' Durick's, I'd be content to live here for the rest o' my natural, leastways till the curtains faded."

The Kid got up then an' said he must be goin'.



"B'ARSKINS," said Campbell, as we was washin' up after lunch, "ain't worth over an' above much at this time o' year."

I don't know as I mentioned previous, but Campbell was a Scotchman—maybe you suspicioned it from his name. But that don't always follow. I knew a Swede once by name o' Campbell, an' Smiley Jay said he knew a Chinaman by that name, ter'ble decent man, too, Smiley said.

We talked for a spell after that, but I'm skippin' most all we said, till Campbell begun again talkin' b'ars, an' says he:

"Funny how that old swine sticks to the foot o' the lake. I've seen his tracks thar before."

"It's the berries, likely. They're ter'ble plenty this season."

"Yes," says Campbell slowly, "I didn't suppose it was argentiferous galena, or copper, or gold-nuggets, or to see if he could find that high-priced watch Peavine said he lost thar three Summers ago."

He walked over to his blankets as he spoke, an' lay down.

It was easy to see that too much rest was beginnin' to tell on him. It was jest as easy to see that unless we did somethin' pretty dashed soon he would be asleep again an' still more rested. But I guess I'll skip again till we went b'ar-huntin'. We did go after the b'ar, you know.

It was about half-past one, I reckon, when we started out. We followed the main trail along the lake to its outlet. I never walked along that trail, but I was sort o' struck with the beauty o' things generally.

To the south'ard the hills rose bluff and were timbered to their summits with fir an' tamarack. Then right beside you, within a few feet most o' the way, was the lake. I mind how ter'ble purty it looked that fine August day. It was smooth, too, as a sheet o' glass, exceptin' now an' again when a little patch o' breeze'd race across it. Every tree an' rock, yes, an' the snowy mountain-tops—you could see 'em clear as in a lookin'-glass away deep down below you. Thar was God's blue sky above you an' below you was the sky. It would near make a man dizzy lookin' down from the queer, unreal height he was standin' on.

Many a time when I've been alone prospectin' along the hillsides I've come out sudden on some big bluff an' looked down

on Moyie Lake layin' peaceful an' still in the long, long valley, maybe one thousand, maybe two thousand feet below me. An' I've sat right down weary an' dry, an' sweatin' with the heat, an' I'd look at it for a consid'ble spell till a kind o' awed feelin' would lay holt o' me an' maybe I'd all at once kind o' rec'nize how awful small an' little I was settin' up thar in the big lonely stillness, for all the world like a whistler in a rock slide.

Then gradually a queer kind o' fuzzy sound would creep into the silence so as I could hear it, like a hundred million little tiny whispers, an' I'd say to meself, "Dan," I'd say, "maybe them's angels."

I tell you right now, thar's somethin' awful queer about big mountains that'll tell on a man who lives long enough among 'em. He'll get to love 'em at last, an' the beauty o' them'll kind o' snuggle into his heart an' lay right down in it an' stay thar, an' worry him with longin' while he's away from 'em, an' kind o' sooth an' pacify him when he's among 'em.

I mind I've often heard Campbell speak o' a lad name o' Burns, Bobby Burns he called him. Maybe you've heard tell of him? I guess he's dead now. He had a sheep-ranch, or at any rate he worked on one. He was out on the mountains all the time, till at last the love o' them kind o' crawled into his heart an', though he'd never b'en taught, so Campbell said, he jest rustled up a pen an' paper an' wrote out a book of about the purtiest rhymes I ever seen.

It was jest the mountains done it. I guess somehow when you're away up high on them by yourself an' get mouchin' round thinkin' big hefty thoughts, you're consid'ble nearer to God A'mighty than them poor little white-faced city-folks. Then maybe, while you was thinkin', a mountain gopher'd come out of his hole an' look at you with his head on one side an' his little black eyes a-twinklin' then maybe he'd let a screech out o' him an' jump back into his hole again. Then you'd kind o' rouse up an' pick up your rifle an' travel on through the gulches an' over the rocks.



MEANWHILE Campbell an' me was walkin' at a good gait till we got to the place where the trail branches an' runs into the timber. A little further, on the timber trail, was the saskatoon-

bushes, an' about the middle o' them a kind o' hogback o' rock riz some twenty foot in height. We walked clear round the bushes, then through them an' over the hogback, but we seen no sign o' the ba'r. By that time I could see Campbell was gettin' dead sick o' the fun. A minute or two later, jest as we was passin' a stick o' layin' timber, down he planks himself on it an' says:

"I'm awful' fond o' good, solid, excitin' sport like this. Thar ain't nothin' after all like big-game shootin'."

With that he begun a fannin' himself with his hat.

What did I say? Nothin'. You might as well chew the rag with a hundred-ton boulder as reason with Campbell when he got sarcastic-like.

In a few moments Campbell got a little cooler an' put on his hat. Then, takin' out his pipe, he filled it an' turned to me:

"Dan, old party, have you got a match?" says he.

"Campbell," says I, speakin' very gentle, "are we b'ar-huntin'?" says I.

"You bet your neck," says he, "but have you got a match handy?"

"Campbell," says I, tryin' hard to awe him, "I've talked to Smiley Jay, an' Dave Smith, an' Ben Pugh, an' Peavine Johnson, an' Angel Pool, an' Paper-Collar Johnny, an' Hank Aller, an' I've talked to Long Shorty on the subject, an' they all says, 'If you're huntin' b'ars, old man, tobacco-smoke ain't considered the best method o' bringin' them round in any great quantities,' that's what they says, an' they've all killed b'ars."

You'd thought them authorities would have had some weight with him, but they didn't seem to worry him a mite. You see Campbell was Scotch. He only looked at me an' says he:

"Do you believe the Kid ever seen a b'ar here?"

"I do," says I mighty short.

"I don't," says Campbell.

"What was it?" says I. "A hummin'-bird?"

"Like as not his shaddy," says Campbell.

"Humph!" says I.

"Now give us a match, partner," says he. So I give him half a dozen.

I left him shortly after that an' went off on my own.

Well I never seen as many berries as

thar was that Summer an' as I walked along I ate them. Bimeby I come on a little clear spot covered with pine-grass an' a big boulder in the middle. On the edge o' the open I set my rifle up agen a tree thinkin' I'd have a good feed o' berries afore goin' any farther. Thar was consider'ble shade to one side o' the boulder and, thinks I to myself, I'll jest pick my hat full an' sit in the shade an' eat 'em. It didn't take me no time to pick a hatful, the berries was that plenty. Then I made myself comfortable with my back agen' the boulder an' soon finished 'em. Somehow it was ter'ble pleasant in the shade o' that boulder an' the first thing I knew I was sleepin' peaceful as a bloomin' infant.



I GUESS I must 'a' slept near an hour, jedgin' by the shift o' the sun.

I think it must 'a' been the sound o' some one a-walkin' that waked me, but I don't know. Whatever it was I heard steps a-comin' soon's ever I opened my eyes.

"Jumpin' maniacs!" thinks I to myself, "but it's the b'ar sure!" An' my rifle twenty yards away, agen' a tree!

Then I listened very careful, an' all the time the steps was comin' closer. Every now an' then he'd stop, whoever he was, as if he was eatin' berries. Then thinks I to myself, that ain't no b'ar, it's a man, sure. It's Campbell. Well, I made up my mind it was Campbell an' I never give another thought to the b'ar, but jest set thar chucklin' to myself an' thinkin' of the scare I'd give him when he come round the rock.

Well it come along very slow, now I'm tellin' you, with the sun behind it an' its shaddy ahead. It was the shaddy I seen first.

An' when I seen the bloomin' shaddy, boys, oh boys! it did everlastin'ly make me sit up, an' the ha'r kind o' riz on me head, an' my heart went hammer-hammer agen' my ribs till I thought it'd bust out, sure. An' thinks I to myself, "Dan, old man, it's time to do a spell o' prayin', for if that's the shaddy o' your partner he's sure changed ter'ble since you seen him last!"

The next thing I heard was a kind o' a grunt, an' the sweat broke out on my forehead, an' I couldn't think o' nothin' but, "Amen," an' the next minute about the biggest an' awfulest kind o' a b'ar was standin' up on his hind legs lookin' down on me

kind o' critical as if he didn't know rightly what kind o' an outfit he had run into, an' s'elp me Jimmy Johnson, my teeth chattered that hard I loosened three an' it took three weeks afore they was right agen.

Well the b'ar he looked at me an' wrigled his nose, an' I looked at the b'ar "in speechless agony," as I seen somewheres in a book. Then all of a sudden he wheeled an', droppin' to his fore legs, I'm blest if he didn't run for it. With that I jumped up hollerin' blue murder, and made for my gun. O' course when I got it thar was no b'ar, but I could hear the branches breakin' as he went chargin' off.

Well, I wiped the sweat from my forehead an' felt kind o' thankful I was alive. Then I started out after Campbell. I found him, too, near the place where I had left him. He was eatin' berries. He was lookin' kind o' subdued, too, which ain't altogether nat'ral for a Scotchman. Campbell was Scotch, y'u know; it's a Scotch name. I didn't rightly know what to say when I come up to him, so I jest said:

"The berries is kind o' plentiful this Summer, old man," I says.

"Yes," says Campbell. He kind o' heaved a sigh when he said it, then says he, "Was it you done all the hollerin'?"

"It was," says I.

"What was you a hollerin' at?"

So I told him the whole story an' he listened very quiet to every thing I said, never once throwin' in a remark.

When I was finished, says he,

"Then it was you scared the b'ar?"

"Why," says I, consid'ble surprised, "did you see it?"

"It ran past me not ten foot away."

"Why in thunder didn't you shoot it?" says I.

Then he looked at me, an' I could see by his face he was sufferin' consid'ble anguish, an' says he, speakin' ter'ble gentle,

"Dan," says he, "I'd left my rifle layin' across a log. I was eatin' berries, Dan," says he.

For a minute or two we was both silent, then he says,

"It couldn't 'a' b'en more than a two-year-old. I never seen sich a mangy little b'ar."

"What!" says I.



THE TOPS'L SCHOONER

The Pirate Craft Speaks

By Kenneth Rand

*YOU fear no more to see my sails
Come sweeping up the seas,
Nor guard with pike and carronade
Your laden argosies;
You never turn and run for it
When the lookout bellows now:
"There's a low, black, tops'l schooner
Just off the starboard bow!"*

*You trudge the sea in sordidness,
And find a sordid grave;
Collision, ice, or hurricane—
You'll die a burden-slave,
And never know the ecstasy
Of a hot fight, hand to hand,
With a low, black, tops'l schooner,
A hundred leagues from land!*

*You'll never smell the powder,
Nor feel your hair-roots rouse
When the long nine sends its warning
Across your questing bows;
When the round shot splits the foremast
And your sturdy spirits fail
As the low, black, tops'l schooner
Pours men across your rail.*

*No more you'll rake the Indies
With clumsy "ninety-fours,"
And strand on hidden coral-reefs
Off fever-ridden shores;
I showed your nimblest frigates
The cleanest pair of heels—
The low, black, tops'l schooner,
That never dawn reveals.*

*For now my snuggest harbor
Shall see me ne'er again,
And now my safest anchorage
Shall wait for me in vain;
A ghost-ship, manned by phantoms,
From Morgan down to Kidd,
The tops'l schooner's left for aye
The islands where she hid.*

*You fear no more to see my sails
Come sweeping up the seas,
Nor guard with pike and carronade
Your laden argosies;
You never turn and run for it
When the lookout bellows now:
"There's a low, black, tops'l schooner
Just off the starboard bow!"*



RED NED OF REMINGTON'S by L. Warburton

NED BURGIN, of Remington's "Tigers," was an adventurer to the core. "Red" Ned he was called, for the good and sufficient reason that he looked it. He had a big red face, a big red, ever-smiling mouth, and a big mop of red, crisp hair. What he might have been had he stayed in the little village where he was born, and falsified his nature, isn't worth speculating about. Nature inflicted him with the *wanderlust*, and intended him for just what he was, and since he had been able to get about for himself he had lived simply to get mixed up in those strange happenings in remote parts of the world where men fight and bleed, suffer and thirst and face death to make it possible for us of the cities to lead our peaceful, humdrum and disgustingly respectable lives.

Burgin had lived a full life even up to this time that I write of. He reveled in his exploits, talked of them, and entertained with them. So it wasn't difficult to learn all about him. Don't misunderstand me. Ned was no hot-air generator. No one knew better than he, when silence was necessary, how to keep his big teeth fitted together like the cogs of a well-milled gear. He wouldn't have been what he was—a good scout—if he had lacked the capacity for saying nothing while busily employing his other senses.

Ned came originally from Devon, famed for its reckless, red-blooded rovers—the home of the Drakes, Hawkinses, and Frobishers, who sallied forth from Plymouth in the days of old to harry the Spanish Main and girdled the world with a chain of

sacked settlements and sunken treasure-ships. At the age of ten he was on a Greenland whaler, having his hide toughened by exposure and the frequent applications of a rope's-end.

To hear him tell of those exciting moments when the quietus was given to many a big sperm as the lance sunk to the haft in the palpitating blubber was to enjoy the exhilaration of an extra dozen pulse-beats to the minute. In turn he was orchid-hunter in Borneo, lumberman in Oregon, and boundary-rider in Queensland, when he wasn't at sea, and his experiences in Africa alone would fill a book.

Ned was big and wiry, keen-eyed, alert, and light-hearted—a dare-devil, reckless character like his old Devon forebears. Home to him was where he happened to be at the moment. Regarding his qualifications for the job of a scout it could be said of him, as they say of a good bushman in Australia, that he could swim like a musk duck, track like a myall blackfellow, stand up to any man, either with the gloves or the naked maulies, and ride anything that was ever lapped in horse-hide. Add to this a deadly precision with the rifle, a capacity for going without sleep and food, a positive scorn of danger, and the description of Red Ned is complete.

He first arrived in Africa, where there is more adventure to the square mile than there is to the thousand in any other country, at the time of the Matabele rebellion in 1893, and signed up for service with the irregular forces of the British South African

Chartered Company, which at that time owned an empire in the heart of the Dark Continent. Burgin was one of a chosen hundred who dashed ahead from Buluwayo to the Shangani River in a despairing effort to succor the little band under Major Wilson when they were surrounded by an *impi* of Matabele warriors. Behind a breastwork of his slaughtered horses Wilson fought for three days, and the relief came just in time to find the shambles complete, the *laager* being heaped with corpses, hacked and mutilated with sufficient attention to fiendish detail to have satisfied even a Turkish patrol in Macedonia.



THERE wasn't much peace in Africa after that, and if adventure was the breath of his life, Burgin had it in his nostrils all the time. The Matabele rebellion wasn't more than safely suppressed after two years of hard riding and harder fighting when Red Ned rode out of Mafeking beside another bold adventurer—that lovable, Quixotic soldier of fortune, the little Scotch doctor, Jameson. Doctor "Jim" sought by a *coup de main* to depose old Paul Kruger from power and give the conspirators of the Rand the measure of freedom they hungered for under the old Dutch autocrat.

It was the maddest escapade in which adventurers ever took part. Scarcely half a thousand men tried to win the capital of a nation in the face of an army of smiling burghers, who calmly waited for the modern Don Quixote and his ragged, saddle-worn Sanchos to ride into their arms. It was a fiasco, but as a forlorn hope it was glorious. The Boer Government knew all that was going on, knew that Jameson had started, which way he would come, and when. The world knew, and looked on and smiled with pity at the sight of so much splendid soul and courage riding to certain defeat and ignominious jail.

Only the Scotch firebrand and his raiders took themselves seriously. Fight? Well, they did the best they could and stuck to it to the last, but they hadn't a chance. They rode straight into a bottle, and General Cronje corked them in. He simply coaxed every round from them by strategy, and when the raiders had plugged old trek-oxen and coats and scarecrows full of holes, and in return had been withered under a galling fire, Cronje walked in and

hauled the lot to prison. Burgin put up more fight than any one. As rider to the Doctor, he resented the unceremonious handling of his beloved chief and fought with his claws like a tiger till he was knocked on the head with a rifle-butt.

Jameson was sent to jail in England. Of his subordinates a few escaped. Among these was Burgin. The sight of a Boer made the old scar on his head throb. He knew what was coming to Uncle Paul later, and he wouldn't have left Africa for a dukedom. So he went back to fighting natives and big-game hunting.

When the hour of vengeance came he was on his way down from Lake Tanganyika with all the ivory he could pack. At Buluwayo a refugee from Johannesburg told him the war was on, and Red Ned sold his year's store of tusks for a railway fare to Kimberley. There was only one objective for him, and he never stopped till he came to Colonel "Mick" Remington's tent door and his salute had been acknowledged by the old border fighter. It wasn't a request, but a demand, he put forward for inclusion in the corps of guides which the Colonel was forming for service against the Boers. None better than Burgin claimed membership in this legion of frontiersmen. None was more readily accepted. Ned's record of scrapes and trouble was sufficient passport for "Mick" Remington, who himself came from that part of Ireland most fightable by nature, most outspokenly disloyal to England, and yet most stanchly pugnacious in her cause.

So the big man from Devon donned the khaki uniform and the broad felt hat with the tiger-cat skin band. From that emblem of ferocity the Guides gained their soubriquet.

Although formed as a fighting regiment, the "Tigers" proved such effective scouts and their services were so badly needed to supplement the ineffective intelligence service of the regular army that, after the disaster at Magersfontein, Remington's men were distributed among the various commands, to act as the eyes and ears of the army in the long march on Pretoria, then being planned by Lord Roberts.

In this capacity the Guides proved true to their name. They ranged the country ahead and to right and left of the columns which toiled slowly over the dusty *veldt*. In little bands they tempted the enemy into

betraying his positions. They broke his communications, raided his transports and generally harassed him. Singly they entered his lines, some of the more daring even penetrating his secret councils, but all the time, in one way or another, the "Tigers" were ever busy bringing in a store of intelligence that was invaluable to the brigadiers. They acted as guides on many a perilous night march when the tired troopers were quietly roused from the dew-laden grass and rode out to attack a sleeping *laager* or take post at a drift to ensure the safe progress of the main body next day. There was always something doing when the tiger-cat skin nodded at the head of the column.

 WHEN the distribution of the Guides took place, Burgin was attached to De Lisle's Sixth Mounted Infantry Brigade, operating on the extreme right against De Wet, bravest and wiliest of the enemy. Here, as a member of the little corps of scouts and native runners under the immediate command of Captain Legge, Red Ned was in his element, and he rubbed the old scar with pleasurable recollection of the score to be wiped out. Burgin's "intelligence" was the best ever. He had a happy knack of handling the Kaffirs and inducing them to tell with the minimum of exaggeration just how many Boers there were about and what they were doing.

Ned could even extract information from the old women around the Boer farms, and if there's any being on this earth more reticent about her man's doings and his company it's the Dutch *vrouw* in wartime. She ceases to be a woman so far as speech is concerned, and neither coaxing nor threats can make her talk. Burgin got his information, I suspect, by simply riding up to the farms and telling the good women just everything that he knew positively was not the truth about the movements of the Boers. Sometimes the women merely smiled in a superior manner, but as a rule the chance to tell the hated *Rooinek*,* who was so cocksure of everything, that he was a liar was too good to be missed.

So by a process of elimination, worked out with consummate skill, Burgin got as near the truth as any man in Africa could get from the women of the *veldt*. Ned's

**Rooinek* in Boer Dutch means "Red Neck." It was applied with contempt to the red-coated British soldiers after the disastrous war of 1881, when the force under General Colley was defeated at Majuba Hill.

pendant, however, was a little nosing-out expedition on his own account. He would drop from our sight, over a near-by ridge, or down the *kloof*, and we would see nothing of him for days, his whereabouts being vaguely known only to his captain. From these jaunts he frequently came back, riding like a fury with a Boer patrol at his heels, the determination of the burghers to get the daring "Tiger" being checked only by magazine fire, as Burgin flung himself into our arms.

Sometimes when his horse dropped from sheer exhaustion, or a Boer-bullet stretched it on the *veldt* as food for the hovering *aasvogels*, Ned walked back, if the distance was not too far. If it was—well, he had a way with him, and there wasn't a native *kraal* that would not welcome him and give him shelter until the column came along. More than once when we rode up to question the Kaffirs, and found the whole family lined up, with the "old man" on the right and the wives and numerous family ranged in review order, down to the pot-bellied baby, all with hands raised and chanting the salute of "*Saka-bona*," an unshaven, worn-out, gaunt figure would issue from the hut and with mock humility would take its place in the line and join in the obeisance.

"Carry-on, men, I was a trooper meself, once," Burgin would jest, as he pretended that our threatening rifles were held at the "Present arms!" "Whose corps are you chaps? De Lisle's? Well, for God's sake give me a plug of tobacco, and lend me a horse! I've got some news for the boss. And say, don't worry old Vinegar-face here. He's a decent sort of bloke, and has done me proud, while the Johnnies have been after my scalp. Leave him a couple of hens and a cock at any rate, and don't drink all his Kaffir beer. He's much-married."

And the jovial devil, worn out, dirty and vermin-infested, would canter away to report to his captain, while we played with the kids and held the post till the regular pickets were sent to our relief.

II



THE rattle of musketry and the devilish tapping of the Colt gun brought the brigadier at a trot to the ridge, just in time to see Burgin ride up out of the *donga*, while a horde of woolly-whiskered burghers who had ridden hard

on his traces for miles sheered off before the hail of lead and made back to cover.

"That red-headed fire-eater of yours certainly knows how to stir up the enemy, Legge," said the brigadier to his intelligence officer. "This means more than an affair of outposts. They are lining that ridge and mean to hold us here. You'll have to restrain that chap, Captain, or he'll be missing altogether one of these days."

"I don't think so, sir," replied Captain Legge. "Burgin takes big risks, but he knows the Boers, and he certainly finds his way about. And if we can't get at them, he brings them to us. His scouting is effective enough I venture to say, sir."

"If you judge by the trouble he brings about us, it is," answered De Lisle, and then as the Captain, who was Scotch, still looked disappointed at what he believed was a reproof of his favorite scout, the brigadier smiled kindly, and added: "Your man's all right, Legge. I don't want him killed for no better reason than the joy he seems to take in baiting the enemy. That's all. He's too valuable. Here come the guns."

When the column camped that night in front of some big *kopjes* that stood out like a wall from the undulating *veldt*, the enemy were in force along our entire front, and their "snipers" were busy till well after dusk among our outposts and grazing guard. The scouts with their Cape-cart, which carried the belongings of half a dozen men whose pride was that they always "traveled light," were right against our lines. It was a sight for the Gods to see "Red" Ned enjoying a gargantuan meal of goat chops, flap-jacks and a quart of black tea that would have ruined the nerves of any man leading a less healthy life than that on the rolling *veldt*. It was his first decent meal for a couple of days, and with soldier-like philosophy Ned knew it might be his last for another period, and he was loading up while the opportunity offered. Up in the brigadier's tent De Lisle and his intelligence officer were busily poring over the war map of that locality.

"Burgin's report, and what we have seen ourselves, fit in very nicely with instructions from headquarters," said De Lisle. "It is clear De Wet has been largely reinforced, as the helio message states, and there certainly is a suspicious activity among the Boers in front. I don't think it's a mere turning movement, because that won't do

them any good. Not while the left flank is rushing the drifts over the Vaal and MacDonald is coming up on the right. The whole stir is designed to hide something even more important than that. What it is I can't just guess, but we've got to find out, and as I can't see behind those *kopjes*, I leave the solution of the problem to you, Captain. Get me the information of what De Wet is after, and get it as quickly as you can. Meanwhile, we'll make our position here secure. The job should suit Burgin, I think."

"He'll jump at it, sir," answered the Captain as he rose and saluted.

Captain Legge walked hurriedly through the lines to his own tent, and passing close to where his men were lolling on the sweet dry grass, sucking their pipes and gazing up at the rapidly starring blue, he called to Burgin. Ned followed his Captain to his tent, from which he emerged some time later, his sharp blue eyes alight with interest and excitement. The rest of the guides were already rolled in their blankets when Burgin returned. Casually he walked to his saddle, unrolled his well-worn skin rug and searched through his holsters. But he did not turn in. Behind the Cape-cart, in the shadow thrown by its hood, the scout shed his khaki uniform and otherwise busied himself for half an hour.



AT THE end of that time there stepped from behind the cart a perfect picture of a Zulu; perfect in color and habiliments. A loin-cloth, a jackal skin *kaross* or cloak, bead bracelets and a hair quill comprised the outfit. In his hand Burgin held a knobkerrie, half walking-stick, half club, without which no self-respecting native walked abroad. Hidden in the folds of the loin-cloth lay the service-revolver that had helped its owner out of many a tight corner.

"Good, verra good," whispered Legge, as the scout gravely squatted on his haunches in the Captain's tent. "The disguise is perfect. Everything is ready, and we'll slip past the outposts without arousing attention or curiosity. Have you got your revolver, Burgin? Then come along."

Legge and the scout made their way round the lines of sleeping men and followed the *spruit* down the *donga* till the neighing of a pony betokened their close approach to their own pickets, when the Captain went

forward alone. There was no challenge to put the Boer sentry, scarce two hundred yards away, on the *qui vive*. Legge had arranged that beforehand, and after a whispered talk with the officer in charge of the post, Legge came back for Burgin.

"Slip by when we have the sentry in conversation," he whispered. "I want you to get out unnoticed, to make certain that there can be no talking later for unwelcome ears to hear. Good-by, Burgin. Look after yourself, and God bless you!"

Legge gripped the scout's hand and wrung it warmly. Burgin waited till he saw the sentry rise from the ground and stand beside the two officers. His moment had come, and dodging behind a clump of thorn bush he moved hurriedly out into the neutral zone unperceived by his own comrades. There was no fear of an intentional betrayal, but the man who succeeds in war is the man who leaves nothing to chance or the babblers of his own side. Once clear of the British lines, Burgin warily picked his way along the array of posts that the enemy had manned. At one moment he was within a hair's-breadth of discovery. He stumbled over the roots of a stunted tree, washed clear of clay by the *spruit*, and sent a stone clattering into the pebbles of the trickling stream.

"*Ja bis dar?*" The hoarse voice of a Dutch picket sounded like a clap of thunder in the stillness of the night, and Red Ned drew his revolver, expecting—the voice sounded so close to his ear—to be pounced upon by a burly Boer.

He hugged the ground closely and waited. Once more the challenge rang out, and the same pause followed. Then apparently the sentry was satisfied that it was nothing more than a bear-cat or a prowling jackal that had slunk silently away, and heaving a stone that skimmed past the scout's raised head, the Boer relapsed on his belly there on the other bank. For ten minutes Ned lay, silent and watchful, before he wriggled his way out of his dangerous position. He was sore and cold when at last he felt it safe to stand and walk upright, but long ere dawn he was well beyond the enemy's line of pickets, away to the right and behind the *koppies* that marked the barrier between the two armies.

A deserted Kaffir *kraal* sheltered him for a brief hour before the eastern sky showed a faint color of the dawn, and refreshed by a

scant meal of biscuit and a sweet ear of mealie corn, Ned grasped his knobkerrie once more and resumed his walk along a dusty track by which the Boers would soon be trekking farther east if the suspected movement were really being carried out. It was not a burgher characteristic to let the sun catch him asleep, and the scout had barely left the hut ere he heard the thump of hoofs behind him.

He glanced back, saw a company of mounted men surround the hut, and continued his way at the easy jog trot of the natives, by means of which they cover immense distances on foot with apparently no discomfort.

Burgin was playing the game he had studied out in all its detail since he had been summoned by his Captain to fulfill the important task allotted him. His close scouting of the previous few days had shown him it was impossible to penetrate the enemy's lines except in disguise, and even then the movement was attended by the greatest danger and had to be executed with skill. Burgin had seen that the enemy were very busy in preparation for a stroke of some sort. From a point of vantage he had held all one long hot afternoon, until he was driven headlong back to his column, he had seen whole commandoes of the Boers arriving from the Kroonstad road to strengthen De Wet, and the very fact that the Dutch outposts were spread out so that hardly a living thing could slip between them unnoticed had told him that something was being hidden.

He could have deserted from the British lines as a discontented muleteer, or *voorkouper*, the man who tugs at the nose-string of the leading ox in the big teams of sixteen drawing the heavily-laden transport wagons. But the Boer is suspicious of proffered friendship. He prefers impressed service to that which is volunteered, especially when he knows that the volunteer has already served another master. Red Ned had no desire to be closely questioned anyway.

He preferred to be captured and appear as an unwilling servant to his captors. In that case he could be as sulky as he liked and as uncommunicative as a stone. The Boers and the natives would call him *mompara*—crazy, and he would be unmolested and freer in his efforts to learn what was in the wind.

III



"HALT there!" Ned heard the command yelled to him in the Taal, a mixture of Dutch and Kaffir. He walked on. "Halt there, I say, you black *skellum!*" the command was repeated, and to emphasize its imperativeness a shot whistled by him and the Boers galloped down on him.

The scout planted his knobkerrie firmly in the ground, raised his right arm, and saluted,

"*Saka-bona, Inkoss-i—Hail, masters.*"

"Where go you, dog?" asked the spokesman of the Boers.

Burgin gravely pointed far away to the white-capped Drakensberg Mountains, shot with the first rays of the rising sun, gleaming like gilded minarets against the rarefied azure sky.

"I go, O masters, to the Roof of the Earth. There my nation call me back from many years of wandering. The great king Cetewayo drove me forth, because I loved a Basuto maid and would not slay her people against whom we were at war. Now I hunger to see my land again. My wife is dead, my cattle taken, and my corn grows not under the hoofs of the white men's horses. Even this morning have I left my *kraal*, a poor man and sad. What wish you of me, O masters?"

"You are probably lying, you rascal, and it's certain you are a coward and afraid of bullets," answered the Boer.

"Not so, *Inkoss*," said the scout, drawing himself up proudly, "I fight not as you fight with the noise-maker that kills from as far as the eye can see; but with the assagai and the war-club have I killed many scores of warriors when the feet of the charging *impis* shook the earth and the blood flowed until the rivers burst their banks. Then they called me after the mighty T'chaka, 'The Butcher.' I am no coward, and the man that calls me that lies, but now I would live in peace, for I know not the way of the white warriors."

"Then you will learn something with us, you dog that men called 'The Butcher,'" replied the Boer. "We will make you work for us, and work hard, or the *sjambok* will tear your hide to strips! Hear me? We want men for our wagon teams. Come with us," and the command was accompanied by a vicious swing with a *sjambok*,

which the scout escaped by stepping back, his blood boiling with rage at the domineering tone of one of his old enemies.

He checked his desire to drag the man from his horse and choke the life from him, and there was no need for him to simulate the disgust he felt at being ordered about by a Boer. He was told to march. Accompanied by one of his captors, he turned about and walked back for three miles or more to where the wagons of the enemy were already inspanning and moving off slowly to the eastward. Ned was handed over to the officer in charge of the wagons, with the injunction from his captor to have him watched closely, as he was a sulky devil, probably *mompapa*, and likely to run wild.

"Ill break him, or flog the hide off him, if he doesn't do his work," said the transport officer with a grin. "Here, you," he added, "take this span and march. And God help you if you lose a beast or stick in the drift!"

Ned seized the rawhide thong attached to the leading pair of oxen in the span pointed out to him, and at a word from the Boer rider assigned to each half-dozen wagons, the long whips of the drivers cracked, the *voorloupers* yelled, and lowering their necks under the yokes the oxen plunged forward with a rush. The huge white tilted wagons groaned and creaked and swayed, the wheels left the hollows into which they had sunk during the night, and amid a pandemonium of shouts, cracking whips, swearing men and bellowing cattle the mile-long supply-train was off across the burned-up *veldt*. The pace was slow, but it was fast enough for Ned, who had traveled all night. And when the wagon came to a hard bit of ground, or when it rolled axle-deep into sandy soil and the span left the track or plunged wildly about, the *voorlouper* had a trying time of it hanging on to the thong in the effort to pull the leaders' heads round to face the track.



AS THE sun climbed higher and beat down fiercely, Burgin was glad to hang his *kaross* on the yoke of the leader and trudge along in his nakedness, his stalwart figure and muscle-swathed arms and shoulders arousing the admiration of even the blacks, most of whom were giants. They called to him and teased him about his awkwardness, but he took no notice. Then his own driver yelled that he

was careless, because he let the span run wild as the wagon crossed a stream. Ned answered not. But when the same man let the long whip fall lightly on his shoulders and the sharp lash raised a livid wale about his throat, Ned forgot everything, let his oxen have their heads, and stepped back with the blood boiling in his veins and murder in his eyes. The driver came running up and the scout drove his big hard fist with all his might and pent-up rage fair on to the offender's mouth. The Kaffir went down with Ned on top of him, one hand fighting for a clutch at his opponent's throat and the other gripping like a band of steel the arm which plucked at the haft of a knife. There was a shout, and in a moment a Boer was upon them lashing fiercely with his *sjambok* of rhinoceros hide. He rained blow upon blow about the fighters' heads until they broke apart and fled from his terrible whip.

"You black dogs," the Boer cried, "I'll teach you to fight! Back to your work, or I'll have you triced up and beaten to death! Serve you right," he added as the driver protested, while Ned, sore but sane again, went back to his post, "I heard you, and saw you strike him first. Leave him alone. He is crazy."

For the rest of the day Ned trudged on in silence, blindly keeping his span to the track and congratulating himself that he would not be molested any further, now that he was supposed to be insane. It was late in the afternoon when a halt was called and the wagons outspanned at a wide stream, which the scout recognized as the Vaalsch, or False River. Already a commando, which numbered over three thousand men was camped there, and the sight of them set Ned keenly alert to the mission which he had set out to accomplish. It was evident to his keen judgment that this force was there to accomplish some special expedition, for the men were all well mounted and young, men fitted to ride hard and endure much to carry out an important task.

Night fell and he had learned nothing definite except that a mere turning movement was not contemplated. That was apparent, because the Boers were already far from the British right, and too far to the north. If it was their desire to work round the weak flank of De Lisle's column they could do that, even with the force they had;

but, as Ned could see, they awaited further reinforcements besides the small guard that had accompanied the wagon train. Worn and tired, he left further speculating till the morrow, and crawling under the wagon fell asleep.



ALL next day the wagons were stationary, and the fighting burghers rested their horses in the succulent grass fringing the river-banks. Every hour more men rode in by scores and hundreds from the direction which the wagons had come from the previous day. Ned lay in the sun on the slopes of the plateau above the river-bed, watching intently the constantly increasing force of the enemy and giving little heed to his oxen, which strayed badly until he was roused by the shouts of the natives and rounded up his span.

It was afternoon when he saw another cloud of dust on the track by which so many riders had entered the camp, and out of it appeared a Cape-cart drawn by four white ponies traveling fast and accompanied by a troop of mounted men.

"That's De Wet," said Burgin to himself. "He generally travels in state," and he watched the cavalcade make its way to the camp.

The vehicle in which the clever Boer General rode was seen by the burghers, and a moment later Ned saw a bustle and stir in the camp, and a shout of welcome was borne to his ears. He would dearly have loved to be close at hand when the General rode into the midst of his men, but that was impossible, and he contented himself for the time with the promise of an early effort under cover of darkness to glean some information that would serve to dissipate the mystery of the Boer mobilization away from the scene of the actual fighting. As it was, he was compelled to exercise all the patience to the display of which he had schooled himself, and he made no false move, although inwardly he fretted over the inactivity as he lay there and pictured the stir in the Boer lines now that the fighting General had arrived on the scene.

Night drew on and the oxen were brought in to munch their meager allowance of mealies around the wagons, the natives being free to sit about and chant their old war-songs or sleep. Ned sat alone beside his wagon, his back against the mud-clogged wheel and his *kaross* drawn closely round

him. Presently he heard voices, and the Boer who had interfered in the fight between himself and his driver approached with another man.

"Then we had better look it over," said the transport rider. "My wagons hold corn and ammunition, but just how much of the latter I am not sure. It was packed hurriedly at the Vaal, and we have moved so quickly that there has been no time to see just what we have."

"All right, Jan," came the answer; "the commando moves some time to-morrow, and the men will fill their bandoleers before they start. The spare ammunition will go in the mule carts. Get your niggers to unload before daylight, and break open some of the cases."

"Yes, Cornet," replied the first speaker, "all will be done as you say. Where do the fighting men go from here?"

"I only know they trek south and east, Jan, the rest is a secret known only to the General. Even the commandants do not know, but I have heard that the General will call them to council to-night. We shall know by this time to-morrow, but the God of the Chosen will grant that they teach these — English a lesson."

"Amen to that!" muttered the transport officer fervently, and the two men sat down and filled their big pipes. Not six feet away the British scout also prayed, but did not address himself to the God of Battles. He appealed to his own strong heart and keen wits not to fail him now, but to enable him to defeat the plans of the Boers, whatever disaster to the invading force the success of those plans meant. He listened closely to all that the two men were saying. They talked about the gathering of the commandoes, the recent fighting and the future of the war.

Burgin could gather nothing final about the move De Wet was contemplating. He could have risen and throttled the men who so glibly quoted Scripture to point every argument that was raised in their conversation which brought him no nearer the knowledge that was so essential to his success.

"I'm the middle and two ends of a blasted fool!" he mumbled to himself at last. "Here I am listening to this brace of pious frauds when they've got nothing to tell me, and the man who knows everything about it is most likely telling his chosen few at this

very moment. If I'm to do anything I've got to be at that council somehow! If I don't get in the know now, I'll have to wait till everything's started, and then it'll be too late to warn De Lisle. Where the devil does De Wet hang out when he's at home?"

The scout had risen with a muttered imprecation at the oxen who were locking their horns over their feed and stamping about. Under the pretense of disentangling them he moved away from the wagon and passed silently through the irregular lines, searching eagerly for the headquarters of the Boer General. Had it been a British camp his task would have been simple, for the lines would have been laid out like the streets of a well-ordered town and the General's tent pitched at the head of the camp. The Boers, however, had as little regularity in the formation of their camps as they had in their fighting tactics. Accordingly Ned had to pick his way carefully to locate the abiding place of De Wet. He found it at last when he saw the four speedy white horses, well groomed and well-fed, which enabled the Boer General to travel long distances without fatiguing either himself or his chargers.

IV



DE WET was seated on a rough stool before a small fire of willow and cow-dung, his square, determined face, with its close-cropped, coal-black beard, and the keen eyes lighted up occasionally as the smouldering fire fanned by the breeze burst into flame and then died down again. With the General were three other Boers, apparently officers of some importance. The scout slipped around the horses and stole noiselessly up to the Cape-cart, behind which, protected from the breeze by a sheet of canvas depending from the high tilt, De Wet's rugs were laid. Ned crouched low against the pole of the cart and strained his ears to catch the soft tones in which the Boer leaders were speaking.

"Ah, here is Ollivier!" said De Wet, as a heavy step was heard and a big man, striding rapidly, passed within three feet of the scout, saluted the General and without waiting for an invitation pulled a box from the cart and seated himself.

"Your men and horses are all here now, Commandant?" De Wet asked the newcomer, in whom Ned recognized one of the

most successful of the subordinate Free State leaders.

"Yes, General," said the commandant. "I have over ten thousand men of the Winburg and Bethlehem commandoes, all eager to move, and all ready to fight. Our horses are fresh, and we need only ammunition and your instructions."

"Good," replied De Wet. "Botha and Roos report the same, and now the moment has come for you to strike at the *Rooineks* and drive them back to the Modder. Because they have had an easy march to the Vaal they count the war over, and already their columns are breaking away to bring in the rich products of our farms. They have sent their fighting General Macdonald east from Winburg to march north along our border and cut off our supplies. Fools! They forget that in their ranks are many of our own brothers, some of whom you have cursed as traitors to our cause, little knowing that they have left the paths of glory that lie before us so that they may the better deliver the enemy into our hands by leading them into false roads. My own sister's son is now guiding them from T'banchu, through the fertile Bethlehem district to Harrismith and Botha's Pass, where they think to reach hands to their General Buller, but by the God of our fathers who has never forsaken us, they will never reach the mountains! Piet Retief is leading them in their blindness straight to Slaughter's Nek, and once they enter the valley of the Wittebergen they will never come out. We will have them secure, and will take them as we took those poor fools of British who sought to march to Johannesburg under Jameson."

"But they will fight, General, when they are trapped, for we know their leader as a man of war and blood," interrupted Ollivier.

"Please God they will," continued De Wet. "Then we will kill them; every one, as our forefathers slaughtered Dingaan's Zulus and gave the Nek its name. Macdonald is a fighter, true, but a child in wisdom. He marches blindly to his doom."

"My God!" the scout said to himself, "De Wet is right. Macdonald's army will never come out of the trap. Curse the fools who have been so eager to accept the service of every — Boer traitor who offered his services!"

De Wet laughed quietly as he watched the faces of his officers who realized the full

significance of the information communicated to them by the wily leader. Slaughter's Nek, as they and Burgin knew, lay scarcely fifty miles away, and was the entrance to a valley thirty miles long, with a narrow egress on to the Harrismith Road. Surrounded on all sides by high mountains, it was a veritable cul-de-sac, and into this the small army under fighting "Mac" was being led by treacherous guides.



EVEN if the British General knew of the danger of entering the valley, his natural love for stiff fighting and the prospect of capturing the Boer supplies held in vast quantity in the valley would offset any fears he had. The Boers were known to have left only the smallest of garrisons there, and "Mac" would march in with his men, believing that he would have an easy capture. De Wet was the designer of the plan to trap Macdonald, and as Ned crouched behind the cart he heard the final instructions given for the completion of the enterprise, which would cost the British so dear.

Ollivier was to march at daylight to within striking distance of Slaughter's Nek, and the other commandoes under young Botha, nephew of the commander-in-chief of the Transvaal forces, were to take a position near the exit from the valley. Once in the Nek, Macdonald would be hemmed in hopelessly. If Burgin was to save the situation he had to act quickly, and as he lay shivering in the cold night dew he pondered over a plan to warn the British General. He had to leave the Boer lines before morning or he would be too late. At that moment Macdonald must be camped within two marches of Slaughter's Nek, and, even supposing that he could return to his own column, Ned felt that time would be lost ere word could be sent to the army marching to its doom.

"The devils!" he said. "They are going to repeat the trap that we rode into five years ago! But let me get out of this with a horse of some sort and I'll beat 'em! If I can reach Macdonald in time, I'll turn the trick on them or I'm a — Dutchman myself!"

He wriggled his way by inches from the cart until it was safe for him to walk boldly back to the wagon where he had first heard the warning of what the Boer activity signified. Already a daring plan had formulated in his mind, whereby he could both leave the camp and provide himself with a speedy

mount at the same time. In the wagon Jan van Beer snored loudly. Under it Ned's late opponent, the ox-driver, was curled up in a tattered blanket. The oxen were placidly munching their cud. Tethered to the wagon wheel, the Boer's horse still nosed hungrily at the empty bag that had held his feed. The camp was quiet, and if ever the moment for his attempt was ripe Ned found it so when the stars were hidden and the wind swept across the *veldt* with a low moan, presaging an approaching storm.

With quick fingers he untied the green hide rope which held the horse captive and knotted it above the animal's fore knee, or as it was called in Africa, "knee-haltered" the beast, so that it could move but slowly, its head being tied down to within a foot of its knee. As Ned expected, the horse immediately limped away in the direction of the little reed-fringed waterhole in search of water.

The scout waited only long enough to assure himself that the moving off of the beast was not noticed. Then his hand felt softly for the knife stuck in the belt of the sleeping Kaffir. The black stirred as the white man drew the weapon, and Ned held the knife poised for the space of ten seconds over the driver's heart. The moment in which the Kaffir should awaken would have been his last, but he saved his life by drawing his blanket closer about his head as the wind whistled under the wagon and relapsing into a deeper and more comfortable sleep.

A long-drawn sigh escaped through Ned's clenched teeth. He listened for the limping steps of the horse, raised himself from his knees, and followed in the tracks of the thirsty animal as it blundered through the camp. A loose horse was no cause for alarm among the fighters on the *veldt*. Careless natives and chewed thongs sent many a hungry *paarde* wandering among the sleeping men, and even when Ned heard an angry Boer swearing at the beast that almost walked on his face as he lay stretched in the cold grass he had no fear of detection, but avoided the owner of the blatant voice all the same.

"Drink your fill, my beauty. There'll be work for you presently, if I know a thing or two," he apostrophised as he watched the beast bury its nose in the earthy water and then stand with ears cocked listening to the bellowing of a bull, far on the other side of

the camp. The scout allowed the horse to satisfy its needs, and then he drove it before him up the hill beyond which his *veldt*-lore told him lay a clear stretch of country, probably free of his enemy. Could he but pass that crest safely, he felt certain of reaching the British column and giving the warning of the Boer trap. At any moment, however, he might run straight into the arms of an outpost. In that event he relied on his pursuit of the straying horse as sufficient reason for his being abroad at that hour when his place was at the wagons, and having gained a moment's parley with any Boer sentry he trusted to fortune to present a chance to escape.



OF HIS own ability to make the best of any opportunity he had no doubt. On he went boldly, creeping after the horse that stopped at every few steps and nibbled a mouthful of spear-grass. Slowly the beast stumbled its way to the summit of the low ridge, driven from behind by the stealthy dark figure pressing it ever on. A few more yards, and Ned sent the brute ambling over the sky-line with a well directed pebble that fell with stinging force on its rump. At the same moment the figure of a man rose from in front of a little pile of rocks and a voice called to the horse. The startled beast snorted at the apparition that so suddenly stood before it and hopped away from him. Instantly Ned rose boldly from the grass and started after the animal. The moment had come for his dash for liberty. It was hopeless to expect to get through the lines and secure the horse he had sent ahead of him with so much patience by any means other than strategy. Straight into the arms of the outpost he went at a jog-trot, calling to the loose horse to stand, and threatening it with all the blights and fates in the Zulu decalogue.

"God in heaven!" hissed the Boer through his teeth, "do you want to rouse the whole camp, you black pig? Come here, you *skelum*, or I'll put a bullet in you! Where go you?" and the sentry's rifle was held loosely on his hip.

Ned saw it, and feigning the fear and trembling of the native in the presence of his master, he approached. For a moment he dwelt on the possibility of dashing past the sentry, seizing the horse and making a wild bid for safety, but the plan was too risky, and even as he considered it he discovered

that the Boers had pickets all along the ridge. They were evidently determined to let no one through their lines, and guarded the movements of the next day or so beyond all danger of betrayal.

"What is it, Marni?" Ned heard another sentry, scarce fifty yards away, ask.

"A — Kaffir, after a stray horse from the camp," answered the man who had challenged the scout. Then addressing Ned he asked: "What is it to you that you should follow one loose horse beyond the lines, dog? Will he not return to his master at dawn for his measure of mealies?"

"O Great White Man, in whom lies all wisdom, the horse will return truly as thou sayest, but the humble servant of my master dare not wait till then. Through the lines of the warriors who sleep, that they may rise refreshed and strong, have I followed the beast that should be saddled before the dawn. A careless Basuto pig fell asleep before his task was done, and my master's horse wanders far in the night. I go to lead him back to where my master sleeps, little knowing what untutored dog he trusts with his swiftest steed."

Ned spoke in the grandiloquent language characteristic of the proud Zulu race, and paused to see what effect his words had on the sentry.

"You speak glibly like a Zulu," said the Boer, "but hold your words to cool your master's wrath in the morning, when he finds that his horse is gone and his dog of a servant is a prisoner. Will he then believe that the servant has not stolen his horse, instead of trying to prevent it straying? He'll be more likely to greet you with a *sjambok* than with praise."

"Nay, *Inkoss*, my master is just, and knows I seek to serve him only, when I guard his goods while others sleep."

Ned had edged closer to the Boer as he talked, and his hand was raised above his head as, after the native fashion, he appealed to the judgment of the heavens that he spoke truth. The sentry had lowered his rifle and was smiling cynically at the protestations of the savage. The scout threw a startled glance over the other man's shoulder. Without suspecting, the Boer half turned his head in the direction whence he believed the Zulu heard or saw something.

In a flash Ned drove his knee into the pit of his enemy's stomach, his fist crashed into the bearded face, and with a groan the Boer

collapsed, his rifle clattering to the stony ground. With a bound the Britisher sprang over the rocks after the horse still grazing close at hand. He reached the beast before it could limp away, his knife severed the leather knee-thong with one stroke, and he swung himself on the horse's back, just as the near-by sentries who had heard the voices realized that something had happened and fired blindly after the flying form.

Ned heard the shouted challenge, felt the bullets zip past him, and lying low on the horse's withers urged it on. The whole line of outposts was awake by this time, and a hundred rifle-flashes illuminated the ridge over which the desperate scout had dashed. Over rocks that answered his horse's hoof-beats with sparks of fire, through cactus and thornbush that tore long lines down his bare thighs and legs, Burgin rode, the bullets whistling and singing past him. He knew nothing save his determination to ride from the ridge. He heard nothing but the pounding of his steed's hoofs.

Dimly he was conscious of a hot sting in his left shoulder as his horse splashed through a stream, but he set his teeth, and with his heels drove it up the far bank on to a stretch of open plain. Once on the level country, Ned reached forward and grasped the halter. His left arm failed to exert an ounce of pressure, but with his right he pressed hard on the nostrils of the flying horse and checked it to a walk.

V



"STOPPED one there," he muttered, as he felt his wounded shoulder, and the warm blood trickled through his fingers. "Lord, but that hurts!" he added, as he pressed the limp member. "Still, I reckon I'm lucky to get only that. Now, my hearty, take it easy for a spell, and then I guess we've got to go our best. That mob back there won't let us off without a chase. Where the — are we, I wonder?" and he peered ahead, as if seeking an answer to his question from the *veldt* itself.

A peal of thunder set his horse all atremble, and a drop of rain splashed his heated face. The storm was about to break in all the fury of a South African thunderburst on the high *veldt*, and presently the space between earth and sky would be one black wall of hissing hail and pitiless rain.

Ned gave one glance for the Southern Cross, which he faintly saw, and turning his horse's head to the eastward of that constellation he sent the beast ambling along. The rain gathered force. A moment later the lonely rider heard the rattle of the hail as it tore across the plain, whipping the grass flat. His horse refused to face it. Ned slid to the ground, and grasping his mount firmly by the halter, sheltered his face from the stinging blast by burying it against the animal's shoulder.

The halt occasioned him no anxiety, because he knew the Boers could not follow him. No horse that lived would face that storm, and many would fly before it in a wild stampede. He congratulated himself that he had at least a couple of miles start on any pursuers, and to find him on such a night was almost a matter of impossibility, unless the Boers connected his escape with their own plans for the morrow, in which case they would take the same direction as he did.

The storm spent itself in its fury, and half an hour after the first thunder-clap the wounded man painfully pulled himself on to the dripping back of his beast and rode till dawn, by which time he had traveled many miles at the easy ambling pace of the Boer pony. Morning found him following a track beneath a tall *kopje*, with a little white-washed farmhouse nestling at its foot. Burgin had no desire to court attention from inquisitive women-folk who might also have a sporting-rifle handy for a renegade black, so he gave the house a wide berth and sped through a mealie patch, plucking as he went a couple of succulent green cobs, and pausing a moment at the far side of it to enable his horse to tear a few mouthfuls of the tender flag-like leaves. There must be no halting for him till he came in touch with Macdonald's scouts, or those of some other British column, a prospect he knew well could not be realized much before nightfall, even if he were not forced to hide for the best part of the day from some wandering Boer patrol.

So on he rode, his wound stiffening and aching horribly, torturing him with an uncontrollable thirst, and shooting him through and through with knife-like thrusts as he strove to sit easily on his tired horse. At noon he drew up at a Kaffir *kraal* to beg for food and water. He was no longer a native except in patches. The fierce rain

had beaten his face partly white again, and even had his speech not betrayed him he could no longer pretend he was anything but a white man. The Kaffirs received him kindly, fed him with a dish of chicken and mealie mush, and when he had eaten his fill and told his story the man of the family plastered his wounded shoulder with white clay mixed with the stinging juice of wild aloes. Ned felt comfortable again, and stretched himself for a few minutes' rest on the well-swept earthen patch before the door. The sun warmed and soothed his tired limbs, and he felt he could have lain there for hours. As it was, he half dozed, and was awakened by a shout:

"*Das Boeren! das Boeren! Fly quickly!*"



HE WAS up in a second and, running round the hut, saw a patrol of mounted men riding up the path scarcely a mile away. His enemies were on his track, and if he would escape not a moment was to be lost. He seized his horse and mounted, dashing away round the shoulder of a little hillock and out on to the open plain once more, the Kaffir shouting good luck to him as he sped away.

The rest had done both man and beast a lot of good, and Ned clapped on the pace as he found himself on easy ground. He was two miles ahead when the Boers came pounding up to the hut and stopped to question the natives. The Kaffir with native procrastination delayed them some minutes before he told them the truth, and the time thus gained was invaluable to the scout. He was a moving dot in the distance when the Boers rode away, but they had found their quarry at last and galloped after him, certain of his speedy capture.

Ned set his teeth grimly as he realized what a race was on. He had the vaguest idea of where he would connect with Macdonald's advance guard, if indeed he could ever reach the British general, but he was determined to ride on till he dropped, and even then fight to the death.

Throughout the long cold night, when he groaned and swayed with the pain of his wound and the numbness of his limbs, he had more than once thanked the god of luck that he had made at least one magnificent deal in his many horse thefts. The sturdy Boer pony was in excellent condition and had carried his big rider so far with scarcely a sign of exhaustion. Ned

leaned forward and patted his mount's neck at this moment when he knew that on the speedy little *paarde*, ambling steadily on over the hot *veldt*, depended his escape with the news that meant so much to the British forces. The scout hoped that Fortune would stand by him till the end, or at worst that she would not desert him before night-fall. Then, even if his steed fell exhausted under the cruel pace set by the pursuers, he would at any rate have a chance to slip away in the darkness.

After an hour's riding the enemy had gained but a mile on him, and Burgin was then in sight of the bluff tops of the *koppies* which marked the walls of the trap into which Macdonald was to ride in a day or so if the weary man failed to reach him. The valley lay twenty-five miles away to the left rear, and Ned turned his horse's head farther south to strike the road that ran from the Ladybrand district to Slaughter's Nek. He figured that the British army would be at least thirty-five miles from the Nek, probably waiting for the lagging convoy, and he had but ten or a dozen miles at the most to ride. Had he not been wounded and his horse tiring under him, the distance would have been a mere bagatelle, but now he felt for the first time the labored breathing of the pony and felt it stumble as it bore him over a stony patch of hard barren ground.

At all costs Burgin felt he must rest his beast, and freshen it up for the final struggle that was bound to come pretty soon now. His pursuers were gaining on him perceptibly, but they were still beyond effective rifle-shot when he slipped from his horse in the middle of a shallow watercourse and let the poor brute drink sparingly. He scooped the water up in his broad hands and splashed it over the quivering animal. Then, taking the thong in his hand, he dragged the pony from the stream and led it up the opposite slope. The Boers, scarcely half a mile away, were dismounted and taking pot shots at him as Burgin staggered on to the next ridge, but hard riding is not conducive to good shooting, and the scout could hear the bullets whistle. There was no danger till they *zipped*, which they always did when they came close enough to be nasty.

For a final effort he dragged himself on to his horse once more and steadied the beast down the hill and out on to the plain,

where he shook it into a labored gallop. Ned was riding blindly now, and his pursuers shouted derisively as they came after him, firing wildly while they galloped. The scout knew the race was lost and the time for his last fight had come. With frenzy born of desperation he urged on his steed, using his bare heels and the knotted end of the halter mercilessly. A clump of thornbush marking a little pile of rocks was his goal.

Toward that he rode for cover, but even as he noted the jagged outcrop his horse staggered, recovered itself for a moment, and sank helplessly with a groan. Ned ran blindly forward, the blood rushing to his fevered head and dimming his sight, but his determination lending strength to his stumbling steps. He flung himself down among the rocks and drew his revolver to fight till every shot was gone. On came the Boers. They were within range of the despairing man, who sighted his weapon across the sun-scorched granite boulder that gave him shelter, when a volley burst upon them from the neighboring slope.

Two men fell, and the rest halted for a second, gazing in surprise at the sudden appearance of mounted men facing them. Red Ned turned a weary gaze in the same direction, and saw through a mist the spotted pelts of the tiger-cats about the hats of the new arrivals.

"The Guides, thank God! Ho, there, chaps! I'm one of yours!" he yelled, and sank limply in the grass beside his fort.

"Saints alive, it's Burgin of De Lisle's!" he heard a voice break in on his dreams of babbling brooks and ripening Devon cornfields. "Hoist him up gently, boys. He's — near done for."

Strong arms were about him, and watered rum and stale tea-leaves from the hot canteens choked his efforts to speak. When at last they had him propped up on a saddle and on his way to camp, he told his story weakly, and remembered no more till he awoke in hospital. An orderly placed in his hand an opened envelope. Ned crumpled it absently before his returning senses prompted him to open it and read on the army field service telegraph form:

Macdonald turned the trick and bagged Ollivier. You get the Distinguished Service Medal. By — I'm proud of you!

LEGGE, Captain of Intelligence.



The WRECK of the *COD-SEEKER* by Colin McKay

“**H**AVE you ever known fear, the stark fear of a slow, lingering, painful, abominable death?” remarked James E. Smith, Fishery-Guardian at Lower Shag Harbor, Shelburne County, Nova Scotia. “I have. Imprisoned in a capsized vessel, gnawed by hunger, tortured by thirst, steeped in a horror of helplessness, racked by a black, blind, bootless rage of resentment against fate, I knew fear, the fear that makes the hair bristle, the saliva in the mouth turn salt and bitter, the perspiration come out in clammy beads on the forehead, the heart almost stop beating.” Then Mr. Smith told this tale:

ON WEDNESDAY, May 9, 1877, the schooner *Cod-Seeker*, bound from Halifax to Barrington, was running before an easterly gale. Her master was Philip Brown; her crew numbered fourteen hands all told. She was a sharp deep vessel—the first toothpick built in Nova Scotia—and she made wicked weather of it as she slashed through the heavy seas.

A while before nine o'clock the lookout reported breakers ahead. Capt. Brown claimed that the white spaces seen were only the reflections of the Cape Light upon the waves; and he kept her going, though some of the older men criticized him sharply for doing so. I didn't like the look of things, but I was little more than a boy then.

The schooner stormed along, growing wilder in her notions, but as nothing happened I soon went down into the forecabin for a drink. As I reached the foot of the companion, I saw a box containing a picture of my girl and some other treasures

shoot out of my berth to the floor, and hastened to salvage my property. That done I went to the cook's water-bucket.

Before I could raise the dipper to my lips the schooner gave a wild lurch and flung over on her beam-ends, and I went sliding to leeward. The light went out; there was a great racket of pots and pans fetching away; a weird lot of noises as the barrels and boxes in the hold rolled into the wing, and brought up against the turn of the deck.

The schooner lay on her side, with her spars flat on the sea, and the water roared into her through hatchways and companions. Getting to my feet I hauled myself up toward the companion, and tried to get out. I might as well have tried to crawl through a sluice-gate. The rush of the water splayed my fingers apart. Soon the bows plunged downward, and the water whelming in with greater force swept me out of the companion.

I fell down on a heap of wreckage on the side of the ship, struck my head against something and was stunned for a space. When I got my wits I was standing up with my feet in the mouth of a berth and against the ship's side, and the water up to my armpits and a raffle of floating wreckage about me.

In a few seconds more I was struggling in a whirlpool of icy waters, beating my hands against the flotsam of the forecabin, unable to see anything or to get a footing. As the ship moved, the flood in the forecabin, rising rapidly, surged back and forth, and once I became entangled in some half floating blankets and nearly succeeded in drowning myself. Like all fishing-vessels she had a large forecabin down in the bows

of her, and in the utter darkness I could not tell my whereabouts.

IMPRISONED IN A CAPSIZED SCHOONER

FOR a time I was too frantic with fright to think of getting hold of anything. I only thought of keeping my head above water.

But presently the ship seemed to grow quiet for a little, and I thought of getting a grip on something. Striking out I ran against a wall with an under slope, felt around, realized that it was the deck and, as there was nothing to hold there, I turned about and swam to the other side.

I paddled about for quite a time. But at last, stretching my hands out of the water, I managed to catch hold of the edge of a board—the face-board of one of the weather bunks. As I held on, taking breath, the water rose and lifted my head and shoulders into the mouth of the berth. I hastily scrambled on to the inner side, then the top side, of the face-board.

While I waited appalled, for I knew not what, I became aware of a moaning sound, and cried out, "Who's that?"

It was Sam Atwood, a young fellow about my own age. He was lying on his stomach on the inner or top side of the face-board of what had been a lower bunk. When the schooner was hove down he had been asleep in his bunk, but somehow he had managed to cling to the face-board, though the mattress and bottom boards had been rolled out into the fore-castle. A man can face death better with a friend near him. I grew composed and began to take stock of the situation.

The schooner had settled as the water got in her and, happily for us, the bows were the highest part of her. We learned afterward that she had drowned two men in the after cabin. She was still on her side, but listed a little past her beam-ends, so that her spars sloped down into the sea at an angle of about twenty degrees. If she had been in still water her keel forward would have been a few feet above the surface and a little under aft, while her decks would have been submerged to a line drawn from the weather windlass-bitt to the weather corner of her taffrail; and inside the water would have been at about the same level—that is, the flood in the fore-castle would have been about seven feet above

the companionway. But, of course, as she wallowed in the swell, the bows were sometimes lifted much higher out of water and at others nearly submerged, causing the water inside to rise and fall too.

The way she lay, the round of the star-board bow was the highest part of her, and we were in the after tier of bunks, built against the bulge of the bow. But our position was precarious enough, and neither dry nor comfortable. The face- or side-board of the bunks on which I was lying was only about twelve inches wide, and I had to hold on with hands and knees, especially when she took a roll, to keep from slipping off and falling into the black abyss on either side. Atwood, lying on the face-board of the lower berth, was in a somewhat better position, as he could only slip off one side. About two and a half feet above us was the side of the ship, the round of the bow; right under us, usually three or four feet down, was the surging flood, and a litter of floating things. Outside the waves were crashing against the hulk, roaring dreadfully.

Sluggishly she rose and fell to the heave of the swell, and we were afraid she would sink or turn turtle altogether. When the bows were lifted up we could sense the water in the fore-castle running aft; and when her bows fell downward, the water would surge forward, back up and overwhelm into the bunk and over us. At such times we had to hold our breath and cling on to our perches for dear life, or sit up and brace our shoulders against the side of the ship.

After a time she seemed to bring up against something with a violent jerk, and her head was dragged downward, while the water in the fore-castle surged afterward.

Mightily alarmed we sat a-straddle on the face-boards, and pressed our noses against the skin of the ship in the angle made by the supporting knee of the deck beam. We found a little air imprisoned there after our shoulders and the backs of our heads were under water. But her bows continued to swoop downward and soon the water was over our faces. I thought it would soon be the end of us. I felt as if my head would burst with the intolerable pressure.

But before either of us lost consciousness something snapped—I thought it was something giving way in my brain. The schooner's head rose swiftly, the water receded and we found ourselves able to breathe

again. Oh, but the air was good! Trembling, dizzy, exhausted, we stretched ourselves along the face-boards and rested.

What had happened was this: When the schooner was hove on her side the anchor-chain, stowed in a box on deck, went overboard, and presently, as she swept along with the tide, the end fouled the bottom and dragged her head under water. Then a miracle occurred; the big link in the shackle of the other end near the windlass broke and allowed her head to come up again.

The schooner wallowed on her side. She rose and fell to the heave of the swell, in a heavy, sickening way, but she did not roll much. Often we were ducked under; and the noises were frightful; roaring, snarling sounds of surf; blood-thirsty gurglings, the dull booming sound of things beating against the skin of the hold. Sometimes I spoke to Atwood, but he was either too stupefied to answer or he could not hear. I lay for a time in an agony of fear. But at last I realized that the ship wasn't going to sink or turn turtle altogether. I suppose her cargo had rolled and prevented her from turning completely over. So presently the sharp fear of being drowned began to give way to a dull horror of our plight.

I was numb with cold, and awfully weary and before long, in spite of the noises, the fear of slipping off my perch, the horror of it all, I dropped off into a doze. And as I dozed I dreamed the schooner was hove down while I was on deck; dreamed that I saw my chum Will Kenney washed overboard and dived after him.

THIRST, COLD AND HORROR

THEN I woke up to find myself struggling under water. It was still pitch-dark and for a moment or so I had no idea where I was. As my head came above the water I struck something hard, and down I went again before I could get my lungs full of air. Half stunned I struggled up again, and rammed my head through a small opening, so small that I could not get my shoulders through. My mouth was just above water. When I tried to struggle through the opening, the thing resting upon my shoulders would lift a little and then press me down till I could not breathe. I struggled frantically, and the harder I

strove to keep my mouth above water the more I seemed to be forced down.

I could not imagine what kind of a trap I had got into, and my imagination was mighty active; just as they say of a drowning man. A moving-picture of my whole life seemed to flash before me. Every deed of a sinful nature I had ever done seemed to rise up against me, crowding out all hope of salvation.

At the same time my mind was wildly searching for an explanation of my plight, and at last, when I was nearly done for, it struck me that the thing that was drowning me was the step-ladder of the forecastle-gangway. That was it; the ladder was floating, and I had got my head between the steps. I knew what to do then, but it was not easy to draw my head down and out, for the bevel of the steps held my head as in a trap.

But at last I managed it, and hooked my arms over the floating ladder till I got my wind.

I yelled for Sam, but got no answer. Of course I could not tell what part of the forecandle I was in, but I paddled around and finally, as a sea lifted me, I got hold of the bunk side-board and hauled myself up inside the bunk. Atwood was still sleeping. I touched him, but he did not wake. I got hold of some pieces of boards floating just below me, and propped them across the mouth of the berth so I would not fall through, and soon I guess I went to sleep again.

THE YANKEE CAPTAIN VOLUNTEERS

WHEN the schooner was flung on her beam-ends, one dory took the water right-side-up and somehow Captain Brown, Nat Knowles the cook and John Smith managed to get into it. Whether they tried to row back and pick off any of the other men left clinging to the weather-rail I don't know; probably it would have been madness to have tried it in the sea then running. Anyway, they drove before the gale for several hours, and then, after passing through a quarter of a mile of surf, landed on the southern side of Cape Island. How they managed to live through the surf has always been a mystery; but they did and were soon at the house of Pelick Nickerson telling their tale.

Nickerson soon carried the news to Clark's

Harbor, and the hardy fishermen of that place were roused from their slumbers to consider means of rescue. The American fishing-schooner *Matchless*, Captain Job Crowell, was lying in the harbor, where she had come for shelter from the gale, and when told of the disaster her skipper was quite as ready to go to the rescue as the men of the port.

His crew was scattered, but there were plenty of men ready to volunteer. So, by the first streak of dawn, the *Matchless* with a picked crew aboard was standing out to sea under double reefs, bound on a mission of mercy. Into the teeth of the gale, putting her bows under to the foremast every plunge, they drove her out to where they expected to find the wreck, and then for long hours they tacked back and forth, straining their eyes into the gloom of the flying mist.

When the *Cod-Seeker* was hove down, the line of men who had been on deck were left clinging on under the rail. They held on there for a while. But when she listed farther over they feared she would turn turtle. They got up on the side, and rove a life-line between the fore and main chain-plates to hold on by. In this position they were exposed to the scourge of the wind and spray, and now and then a heavier sea, making a clean breach of hulk, would stamp right over them. But they held on, and you may imagine that after daylight they searched the howling seas with eager eyes for sign of a sail.

As the morning wore on the buffetings of the seas, the numbing cold, began to tell on their strength, and along about noon a towering comber bursting over them swept one poor fellow, Crowell Nickerson by name, from the life-lines, and he was drowned before the eyes of his mates, powerless to help him. His body became entangled in some cordage, and hung to leeward.

Naturally this tragedy affected the spirits of the survivors. They watched the towering surges rushing down upon them with a new fear in their hearts, each man thinking that perhaps the next big sea would sweep him to his death. But soon they learned the calmness and the courage of despair. Will Kenney, as a requiem to the dead man to leeward, began to sing:

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly."

All the men joined in the good old song.

And then, just as they finished the last verse, Will Kenney cried: "Look! Look! A sail!"

The schooner sank into a trough. The men waited, their hearts in their mouths. And when she rose again all saw the sails of a schooner swinging out of the mist hardly half a mile to leeward.

It was the *Matchless*, and the men on her had already sighted the wreck. Tack by tack she beat up to windward and then her big seine-boat was manned. It dropped under the lee of the wreck, and the men were picked off by being hauled through the sea with a line about their waists.

The *Matchless* picked up her boat without mishap, and then, because it was blowing a gale of wind with a heavy driving mist making it impossible to see any distance, she was hove to for the night.

Next morning, the weather having moderated, she made sail and at three o'clock in the afternoon stood into Clark's Harbor with the Stars and Stripes flying at her masthead as a sign to those on shore that she had accomplished her mission.

A small boat took the rescued men, Will Kenney, William Goodwin, Jesse Smith and Jeremiah Nickerson to Bear Point, where the relatives and friends of the crew of the ill-fated schooner had gathered. You can imagine the scenes that marked their return, the joy of their relatives, the frantic grief of those who had waited in vain for their loved ones.

Meantime Atwood and I, inside the hulk, knew nothing of this rescue, and nobody suspected that we were alive. While the gale continued, the seas crashed against the wreck with dreadful roaring sounds, and it was so dark that most of the time we could not discern anything. Sometimes the bows would be lifted up and the waters would recede toward the stern with a roaring as of surf. Again her head would fall off into a trough, and the water would surge forward and cover us completely.

Many times I spoke to Sam, but he never answered me. Afterward he told me that he had spoken to me many times, and got no answer. The only explanation of this I can give is that the awful roaring of the sea affected our ear-drums, as if we had been immersed ten feet in the sea. I had the kind of sensation in my ears that you have when you take a dive.

As Thursday dragged along we began to

feel the pangs of hunger and thirst, and our flesh began to feel benumbed, the result of our frequent cold baths. But we dared not move from our perches. In spite of it all I would fall asleep and dream of the disaster, or of home and loved ones—and then awaken with a start to a keener fear and horror of our plight.

THE FEVERED HUNT FOR FOOD

THAT night the gale blew itself out, the dreadful roaring of the waters began to die away, and Friday morning came fine and clear, though a heavy sea continued to run. After sun-up we were able to see objects in the fore-castle quite distinctly.

The light cheered us, and we thought of getting something to eat. At the end of the bunk in which we were lying there was a locker and, getting hold of some sticks, we started to break into the side of it. We broke into one compartment, and found two empty bean-crocks and an old clock. We broke into another, and found nothing, but in the third and last we found five doughnuts, soaked with salt water and kerosene. Soggy as they were we salvaged them and ate them.

Then, feeling thirstier than ever, we looked for some water. A number of barrels were floating about the fore-castle; a big hole had been made by the sea in the bulk-head, and they had drifted in from the lazarette. We caught one as it drifted near and, though the way the water was surging back and forth and up and down made it a mighty hard job, we managed to hold it, while I sampled the water in it, using a barrel-pump as a sucking tube. My mouth was so parched that I drank a lot of the water before I could tell that it was salt. We dropped that barrel, and tried all the others we could get a hold of, and with the same result. All the barrels that floated had the bungs out, and sea water had got into them.

Tired and disgruntled we gave up the quest, and soon had to face a new trouble. In breaking in the sides of the lockers we had loosed the supports of the bunk side-boards on which we were lying, and the ends were beginning to sag down. We had to do something or we would soon be dropped into the swirling water, and we looked about for something to prop up our perch.

The lazarette door was swinging to the

motion of the water, and presently I managed to get hold of it. Then, while Atwood held me, I pulled; pulled the door right through the panels, a feat men afterward said was impossible. We placed one end of this door against the side of the fore-mast, and the other against the side-boards of the bunk and, as luck would have it, it turned out to be just the right length to wedge the side-boards back in their places. Then we tore off the door of the flour-locker and, getting this inside the berth, made a platform for ourselves.

Shortly after we finished that job a barrel of biscuits—I could make out the label on it—came sailing in through the hole in the bulkhead, and we became amazingly hungry with the thought of getting something to eat. After what seemed an age it drifted near, and I got my finger on the chimes. But though I held on like grim death and Atwood held me, the surge of water tore it from my grasp, and it sailed back into the hold the way it came and we never saw it again.

WAITING FOR DEATH

THE ship wallowed heavily in the swell, and the water continued to rise into the bunk, keeping us wet and cold. Now and then the rays of the sun would strike the deck light, so that it would be reflected to the lower side, and there in one of the bunks we could see a shape rolling slightly to the motion of the ship, which we thought was the body of the cook rolled in his blankets. And, of course, that gruesome thought added to the horror of our plight.

The fore-castle-companion, which was about eight feet under water, was outlined by a glimmer of light. A good swimmer might have dived out, but we felt too stiff to try it, and it would have been a desperate job, the way the water was surging and swirling. But we wished a fish would swim in and allow us to capture it!

The time dragged along and, as the thirst took a fiercer grip on us, we ceased to feel the pangs of hunger. Our tongues swelled and burned; griping pains took us by the throat; our muscles ached as if pricked with hot pins. Having swallowed so much salt water, I suffered more than Atwood, and that afternoon I grew so wild I cut the ends of my fingers and sucked the blood. But that did me no good.

Night came again. We slept fitfully, dreaming of fresh, cool, sparkling water, and just as we were about to drink we would awake with a start to feel again the burning, griping pains of thirst, and brood in agony of mind upon the thought that we were doomed to die a slow lingering death of torture. To add to the horror, I became aware that I had no feeling below my knees. I tried to pull off my sea-boots, but my feet were too swollen. It was as though I was dying from my feet up. That night I knew what fear is, the stark, fierce, angry fear of a long-drawn-out and terrible death.

When Saturday morning came we were half stupefied with suffering. Several times we talked of dropping into the water and drowning ourselves. And always the temptation to drink the salt water was strong upon us. But we kept our heads; we hoped against hope that we would be rescued, and determined to hold out as long as we could.

That afternoon the long swell began to subside. The schooner grew quieter, and ceased to duck us, and the fever of our bodies dried our clothes. The fact that the swell was going down brought us face to face with a new cause of fear—the fear that soon there would not be sufficient trough to the sea to cause the main hatch to blow, and give us fresh air.

But we did not worry greatly over the prospect of being stifled for lack of oxygen; we had about exhausted our capacity for fear; we were too sick and miserable generally to be much troubled by the appearance of a new peril.

After Saturday noon it was just suffering and endurance. We seldom talked; our parched throats and swollen tongues made speech painful and our voices sounded weird and unnatural. Nor did we think much. Most of the time we lay as in a stupor. Now and then we dreamed of beautiful ships all around us, all coming to our rescue, and would awake with a start to wonder if we were going mad. We lived as in a nightmare, lost count of time, felt as if we had suffered through eternity. We were growing light-headed.

THE SPOOK OF THE DERELICT

ON SUNDAY afternoon the schooner *Ohio* of Gloucester, Captain Edward O'Dor, was standing up for the Cape Shore when she sighted something black floating

upon the waves. Some of her crew took it for a dead whale; others said it was a wreck; and a heated argument ensued. To settle it, the Captain hauled up to investigate. Seeing that it was a vessel bottom-up he sent a boat to try to find out her name, and see if they could salvage anything.

So presently I thought I heard some unusual noises, and roused myself from my lethargy to listen. In a few minutes I heard a sound like the clang of iron on iron; a man cutting at the lanyards of the forerigging with an ax had hit the iron strap of the deadeye.

"There is somebody outside," I said, shaking Sam.

But he showed no interest.

"It's only something washing about the hold," he answered.

"Let's shout, anyway," I said, and yelled as hard as I could:

"Help! Help! Help!"

Over my head there was an answering yell of startled fright, then footsteps pounding aft and a voice crying:

"She's haunted. Get into the boat, for — sake!"

And that chap so frightened the others that they piled into the boat and started to pull away. But, after recovering from their fright and astonishment, they grew ashamed of themselves and came back.

Meantime I had got hold of a stick and was rapping against the side. Soon I heard raps on the outside. I gave three raps and there were three raps in answer. We kept that up for a few minutes. Then we heard a man walking forward on the outside, and soon a voice called:

"In the name of God, are you ghosts, living men or the devil?"

We shouted that we were living men, and asked them to get us out, or we would not be living men very long. The voice asked us questions for a few minutes as if incredulous, and then some of them got to work with axes over our heads, while the boat went back to the *Ohio* for more men and axes.

They worked like Trojans, and cut right through a frame-bolt to make a hole to get at us. When they broke through, the eruption of imprisoned air acted like a whirlwind, and the water leaped through the hole in a solid stream fifty feet into the air. Small sticks which had been floating in the

forecastle whizzed by our heads. One man was knocked over as if by an explosion. They told us afterward that the released air gave off a sickening stench.

The schooner settled two or three feet, lurching as if she would turn turtle completely, and the men chopped away with redoubled energy. They soon had a hole about nine inches by eleven inches.

Atwood, being slim, was pulled through without trouble, but when I got my head and one shoulder through, I stuck. Four men got hold of me and pulled, and at last when I thought I would be pulled apart I came through, minus my vest and several strips of skin.

A NEW HEAVEN—AND A NEW AGONY

AS I stood looking around I thought of a passage of Scripture which reads, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth." The sun was nearing the horizon, glowing softly amid a glory of rose and gold. Never have I seen such beauty in the heavens. Of course, I couldn't see the earth, but the sea lay broad, silver-tinted, smiling and strangely friendly looking.

The schooner which four days before had been taut and trim was now almost bottom-up, lying with her keel six feet above the water and her weather-rail nearly a-wash. Her mainmast was broken off and, far below the surface, I could see a faint shadow of canvas. We thought then we were the only survivors.

Was it any wonder I thanked God for my deliverance?

Captain O'Dor said, "Come, my boy, let me help you to the boat," and took me by the arm. I thought I could walk, took a step and went tumbling. If it hadn't been for the Captain I would have slid into the sea.

Aboard the *Ohio* they had made ready for us. The cabin table was loaded with everything good to eat. But we weren't interested in food; we wanted water by the bucketful. They gave us a spoonful, and that only put an agonizing edge on our thirst. We pleaded wildly for more.

But they had realized our condition, and kept us waiting for about fifteen minutes, and then only gave us another spoonful. After what seemed ages of raging agony they began to give us a spoonful every five minutes.

But the more we got the more we wanted, and the harder we begged and pleaded. Our voices were husky and unnatural and we must have been pitiful objects, for we soon had most of the men in the cabin blubbering like babes. We thought we were moving them and pleaded harder. But we merely moved them out of the cabin, all but one hard-hearted old shellback who stopped to give us the pitiful spoonful of water every five minutes by the clock.

After we had realized the uselessness of crying for more water, and had become quiet, the cook and some of the men returned and cut off my sea-boots. My feet and ankles were badly swollen, and the flesh looked like the flesh of a drowned person who has been many days in the water. The cook began to put potato poultices on them, and in a few minutes the poultice would be baked as if in an oven.

It was six o'clock when we were rescued and we were given a spoonful of water every five minutes up till midnight. But for all that my whole system was still raging so fiercely for water that when at the change of the watches we were left alone for a few minutes I got out of my bunk, crawled to the gangway, got the jug of water and started to drink.

Atwood, lying in his bunk, saw me and begged:

"Give me a drop—just one drop. Please—please—just one drop!"

That was too much of a gift. I wouldn't have spared a drop for the world. I drained the jug—and swelled up like a frog.

When the watchman returned and saw what I had done he cried out,

"The man's killed himself! He's drunk two gallons of water!"

The skipper and most of the men came into the cabin—to see me die I suppose. But I did not feel any ill effects from that drink and it did not stop the maddening craving for water.

Meantime the *Ohio* was standing in for Wrayton's Harbor, the nearest port to our homes. When we were picked up our position was twenty-three miles sou'-west-by-south from Seal Island. By eight o'clock Monday morning we passed Bon Portage, with the Stars and Stripes flying to the breeze, and soon thereafter were lying at anchor in the harbor.

As I was being rowed to the shore I saw the cook of the *Cod-Seeker* in my gunning-

boat. Greatly surprised to see him alive I sang out:

"Hello, Nat Knowles! Where are you going with my boat?"

The man dropped his oars and went white as a sheet. And no wonder. Everybody had given us up for lost.

Needless to say, when I was carried home my parents were beside themselves with joy. As they expressed it, I was as one risen from the dead. The news of our rescue spread up and down the shore, and was generally received with unbelief. Many people would not believe we had managed to live so long in the capsized vessel, and hundreds came from long distances to see us.

After I reached home I developed a high fever and my feet began to pain me. I had no desire for food; in fact I scarcely touched food for two days. But I was still raging with thirst. I wanted water all the time—milk or tea was no good. I was allowed a glass of water every half hour, but it was four days from the time we were rescued before I got over that awful thirst.

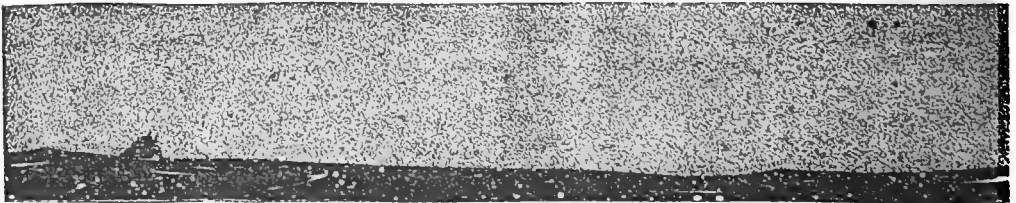
But my sufferings were not over then. My feet pained me terribly, and I couldn't sleep without a narcotic, and then only for a short time. Doctor Clark who attended me said ten drops of the narcotic would kill the devil, but I was so crazy with pain and lack of sleep that I used to cry for a big dose every few hours.

And one afternoon, when mother was out and the spasms of pain were wracking me,

I crawled on my hands and knees, got up on a chair, took the bottle of narcotic from the shelf and drank half the contents. Then I navigated my way back to the lounge, crawled half-way up on it and went to sleep. That was the deepest, the best, most blessed sleep I ever had. The Doctor and everybody thought I had gone to sleep for good and all, but I came round in twenty-six hours, feeling fresh and fine. But I continued to suffer great pain in my feet for two weeks, and it was a month before I could walk.

ONCE MORE ON THE TRAIL

MEANTIME the *Cod-Seeker* had been picked up by two vessels, the *Condor* and *Dove*, and towed into Green Cove break-water and righted. The body of Crowell Nickerson was found floating in her hold; that of William A. Smith badly burned in his bunk with the cabin stove on top of him; and that of Robert Barss in the cabin companion with his arms jammed in the binnacle. After the schooner was righted she was brought home and repaired, and in July I shipped in her again and sailed in her till Christmas, sleeping in the same berth Atwood and I had occupied during our tough experience. Properly ballasted, the schooner proved a good sea-boat. She was out in the great Newfoundland gale some years later, and was one of the five fishing vessels out of a fleet of thirty-five that made port again!





WHITE MAN VS. TIGER *by E.A. Morphy*

II HE Sultan Suleiman smiled unctuously at the two white men who squatted on the matted floor beside him.

"That is a magnificent seladang," said he; "a pearl of the jungle, and well suited to such a glad and honorable occasion as that which we now celebrate. This is the first time we have given the right of mining for tin to any stranger in the kingdom of Perkam."

He pointed to the giant wild ox that chafed and bellowed in the pit below them—every now and then pawing up great lumps of earth, or digging furiously with his mighty horns at the banks of the sunken arena.

Trench and Carrington nodded a dutiful acquiescence. The brute was a palpitant picture of power.

"They are bringing a tiger for him!" explained the potentate. "He is a noble seladang, therefore he shall fight a noble tiger. The Tuan's servant," he added, leering maliciously at Mr. Trench, "described the Tuan as being swifter than the tiger and stronger than the seladang. Did the Tuan ever see a seladang such as this?"

Mr. Trench grunted a negative.

The seladang stood well over six feet at the shoulder. He was a glossy brown monster, with whitish legs and belly, while his head, which was rather darker than the

rest of his body, towered nearly nine feet above the ground. The tips of his massive horns—each two and a half feet long, and a good six inches in diameter at its base—were nearly three feet apart. His red nostrils quivered with fury.

The Sultan, his guests, and all his retinue, squatted under an attap shed on the eastern side of the cage-like amphitheater that held the monarch of the jungle.

Close by, to the right of this shed, were about a dozen smaller cages of hardwood and bamboo. In each of these receptacles chafed and roared a freshly captured and ravaging tiger.

A party of about twenty laughing and gesticulating Malays was busy dragging one of these cages down a sloping passage that led to the floor of the arena whereon raged the bellowing seladang. Around this arena a ring of strong palisades, interset with bamboo, was raised about fifteen feet above the outside ground-level, and partially roofed over, like a cage.

The level *padang*, or clearing, that formed the park to the Sultan's Istana, and in the center of which stood the cage with its rampant captive, was crowded with chattering Malays in their gala clothes, who had assembled for this exquisite holiday entertainment.

The seladang was to fight tigers until it perished. Then—so the Tuan Bendahara had whispered, and the news had

spread like wildfire—the white Tuan would fight a tiger for his life. If ever there was a perfect *Hari Besar*—an incomparable “Red Letter Day”—in the glad history of Perkam—here, most assuredly, they had it.



NEITHER Mr. Trench nor Mr. Carrington had any inkling of the second part of the programme; but since they had been politely yet firmly restrained from making their departure from Perkam by the wretched little coaster that called at the bar of the Kuala about once every six weeks, save during the monsoon, their minds had been beset by uncomfortable forebodings.

Three days had passed since the steamer left; and the new and unholy joy which had lately begun to illumine the faces of the Sultan and his courtiers, failed to re-assure the adventurers.

Fortunately, when the persistent series of delays had begun to occasion doubts as to the *bona fides* of the ruler—so far, at any rate, as concerned the concessions that they sought, and which he half-promised to them day after day—they had induced their native servant, Salleh, to seek safety and the steamer, bidding him to await their arrival on board, and giving him a letter to deliver to the skipper, “in case,” as they said, “they were unavoidably detained.”

They had been “unavoidably detained.” His Highness had playfully but inexorably insisted upon their waiting in Perkam to witness the *Hari Besar*, or festival, with which he proposed to celebrate their advent and the bestowal of the first tin-mining concessions in Perkam upon a Tuan from over the seas.

They did not appreciate the honor, and now they only hoped that the departed Salleh would deliver the letter to the skipper of the steamer, and thus give warning of their plight to the outside world. For the letter stated that, in the event of their non-appearance on board, the skipper was to understand that they had been forcibly detained by the Sultan. It was the last trip the coaster could make that season before the monsoon shut in Perkam for another three months. But the skipper was requested to notify the circumstances of their detention at the first British port, or to the first British Consul, or British warship, he might chance to find.

If Salleh delivered that letter, there was some chance of an early rescue—always assuming that the Sultan meant to do them harm. If Salleh failed in his mission, well—

“That is a magnificent seladang!” repeated the ruler, with unctuous venom. “Watch him do battle!”

The great ox raised his forefeet on to the edge of the pit, and snorted vainly through the surrounding palisades. His angry eyes blazed like immense rubies of fire.

“*Hail Hail Hail*” shouted the Malays who had dragged down the cage that held the tiger.

They placed it against a sort of grille that opened upon the arena.

The seladang scented the king-cat, and whisked around with incredible agility for so vast a creature. Then with a roar, he leaped half across the arena, and, head down, butted into the grille with his lowered horns.

The tiger’s claw flashed out.

The act was instantaneous, almost invisible. It was like the jerky snap of a kitten’s paw at a playful puppy.

The seladang drew back with a grunt. As he did so, the Malays lifted the grille, and one of them prodded the tiger with a spear.

Head down, with legs asplay, the seladang waited.



BLOOD poured down his face. Raw flesh showed in seams and furrows along his cheek and through his split nostrils. The claws of the tiger had rent him down to the teeth and bones. He shook with amazement and fury. Then, when the tiger leaped from its cage and crouched for a spring as the grille crashed down behind him, the bison humped his back and charged his natural foe.

The tiger sprang as the bison charged. The two brutes met with a flurrying crash and a snarling bellow. The tiger’s front paws sought and ripped the seladang’s shoulders, his hind claws strove again to tear the face of its antagonist.

Belching its snorts, swift, irresistible, the seladang continued its charge, bearing the tiger backward between its horns, and plastering him against the clay wall of the pit.

There was a queer sort of a squelch, followed by an agonized snarl.

The seladang leaped back, bleeding fear-somely, but with uninjured eyes, glaring unspeakable venom at its enemy.

Equal venom blazed from the eyes of the tiger, as it lay with its saber-fangs uncovered in a continuous snarl, and its slavering jaws wide open.

No roar came from its mighty throat. Seemingly, it made no effort to get up. Only its front claws moved, and they opened and shut in clutches of malignant ferocity.

The animal measured nine feet from tip to tip if it measured a fathom, and must have weighed nearly a quarter of a ton. It lay on its side by the wall of the pit and glared at its enemy.

The seladang romped back about a dozen feet. Then he shook himself, and twitched his skin, as a horse twitches his skin to shake off flies. The clay under his rounded hoofs was red with his blood—red, slippery and steaming—but all that seemed to bother the tormented brute was the blood that poured into his eyes from his torn forehead.

This he shook away with a jerk that sent a splattering shower of crimson through the palisades.

The Sultan held his breath with excitement and delight. The crowds on the padang murmured their ineffable joy at the spectacle. Humping his back, the seladang charged again, and hurled his enormous bulk—head aslant, horns down—against the prostrate tiger.

Bravely the great cat waited; gamely it strove to claw the face of the giant ox. But its spine was broken, its ribs crushed, its paws useless.

Thirty inches of horn smashed through his chest. Then aloft the seladang lifted the five hundredweight of helpless power, and tossed it above its head.

The tiger swung limp on the reddened horn. The blow had pierced its heart.

With a twist, the seladang cast its dead enemy to the earth. Then it sniffed at the limp body, snorted again, and drew back, panting, to the side of the pit nearest the Sultan.

 "BAGUS!" grunted the Sultan, his narrow eyes gleaming. "Bravo!"

The gray-headed Bendahara, or Prime Minister, leaned over his master's shoulder—the red betel that he was chewing dribbled down his withered chin.

"What were his Highness's commands?"

"Bawa lian rimaul" ordered the Sultan. "Bring on another tiger!"

The seladang stood snorting and panting by the side of the pit, anon pawing the muck at its feet, anon whisking the blood and flies from its face, but always watching the tiger. The tiger remained motionless—a crumpled heap of stripes and yellow. It was stone dead.

"Bawa lian rimaul!"—"Bring on another tiger!"

The Bendahara shouted in staccato tones to the men at the cages.

Cheers and yelps of glee arose from the happy spectators on the padang.

"They're not going to give the poor fellow a show for his money," whispered Mr. Trench to his companion. "I'd like to put a shot in him, but a pop-gun would be as much use as a six-shooter against a brute like that."

"It would sure queer the pitch with his job-lots, too," agreed Carrington. "If we butt in here, we'll get our throats cut."

Mr. Trench agreed. He noticed that never for an instant was either Carrington or himself allowed to stray beyond easy stabbing reach of the grinning courtiers who waited upon them with irresistible assiduity. These courtiers, resplendent in their holiday jackets and *sarongs*, simply bristled with kris and swords. In the gay crowd outside, practically every man was armed with a kris or two in his belt, as well as a *parang*—the latter being a heavy-bladed knife, like a compromise between a cutlass and a Goorkha's *kukri*, which is carried behind, over the hip, by every jungle Malay.

"Bawa lian rimaul" chorused the crowd, with here and there a daring cry of "Bawa satu Tuan!"—"Bring on a white man!"

Trench noticed that a couple of the younger courtiers looked at him and cackled with laughter at this singular cry.

Carrington saw it too.

"If I'm getting wise to it, right side up, Bill," said the latter, "it's up to one of us to play the giddy Christian martyr act in this elevating moral show."

"Something's afoot!" agreed Trench.

Meanwhile the tiger guards were joyously dragging another cage down the passage that led to the pit.

The seladang, still panting and bleeding profusely, watched the preparations with angry eyes; but when the grille was opened

to permit the escape of the tiger, neither animal sprang forward to the attack.

The tiger merely crouched in his cage with his teeth bared in a snarl. The seladang stood facing him, legs apart, head half-lowered, strictly on the defensive.

 FOR the space of half a minute, both brutes glared at each other. Then, at a signal from the Sultan, a couple of the attendants poked at the tiger with spears that they thrust into his cage from behind.

Roaring savagely, the great brute leapt into the arena.

He was a big tiger, though not so bulky-looking as the dead one that lay jammed against the side of the pit to the right of the grille. But he did not seem in the least anxious to attack the seladang that now stood snorting and facing him, with its head down, back humped, and tail arched up wickedly.

Two Malays ran up a sort of ladder that led to the bamboo roof of the cage. One carried a steaming vessel that seemed to contain boiling soup, but which really held a mordant stew of scalding chilli-peppers. The other had a bunch of particularly poisonous nettles tied on to the end of a bamboo, like a broom.

The Bendahara stepped over and politely explained the arrangement to the white men:

"When the red pepper gets into the wounds and eyes of the seladang, he will go mad with anger and kill the tiger. Should the pepper fail, the nettles will decide him. The stings of those nettles would make a rat attack an elephant. They bite into the marrow of the bones!"

"*Ai! Ai!*" yelped the men on the cage-top, as the elder of the two deftly poured the boiling peppers over the angered seladang. At the same instant, his comrade thrust down the nettle broom.

The attack from overhead goaded each animal into action. The seladang charged and the tiger sprang, simultaneously.

This time the ox failed to catch the great cat on his horns. The tiger swerved to the right and landed on the left shoulder of his enemy. There he clung viciously, tearing at the flanks of the seladang with his claws, and gnawing ferociously at its neck.

Frantically the tortured seladang strove to leap up and shake off its fierce antagonist.

Desperately it lunged toward the side of the pit and sought to brush the clinging brute away. The tiger held on, ripping, gnawing, tearing. The giant ox tottered to its knees. The tiger clutched deeply into neck and flank with his distended forepaws, while he tore more venomously with its hind legs, ripping the flesh from the side of its wounded prey in horrid ribbons.

With a final convulsive effort, the seladang jerked the tiger off his shoulder. Like lightning, the great cat turned; but, in the instant, the seladang's horn caught him in the stomach. Both animals were mortally hurt.

The tiger slunk back into the cage, which was still open. The seladang remained on his knees, still splendid in his fury, but bleeding to death.



PRESENTLY the tiger and his cage were dragged away, and a powerfully built Malay stepped into the pit where the seladang now lay on his side helpless. With a huge butcher's knife, he deftly cut the dying animal's throat.

"That's the first touch of mercy I've seen in the circus, so far, Bill," whispered Carrington, as the Malay gave the great ox its *coup de grâce*.

"Mercy, my eye!" said Mr. Trench. "These jokers are mostly orthodox Mohammedans, that save up their dibs for half a lifetime so that they can do the *Haj* to Mecca and be sure of Paradise when they croak. They're all dead nuts on beef, but the Koran won't let them eat the meat of any animal that hasn't had its throat cut before it dies."

II



FROM all sides of the padang now arose shouts, glad but insistent: "*Bawa Tuan!*" "*Bawa satu Tuan!*"—"Bring a Tuan!" "Bring on a white man!"

The Sultan turned to Mr. Trench.

"You hear how my people hunger to honor you!" said he. "They would give you a tiger to play with!"

"I can't say that I'm so anxious to play with a tiger just this minute, your Highness," replied Mr. Trench, as casually as though tigers were the customary toys of his leisure. "What on earth has put it into the heads of your pals outside that I ever had a weakness that way?"

"Did not your messenger describe the Tuan as being swifter than the tiger and stronger than the seladang? The Tuan must assuredly have shown him that such was the case. Otherwise had he never dared to speak of it to me in my kingdom of Perkam. As the Tuan's servant hath said it, I personally know it must be so. And I also know that the Tuan would not refuse me a paltry favor when I have promised him the right of working all the tin-mines he may locate within the next two years in this, my country. I pine to see him fight a tiger. My people yearn for me to give him a tiger to fight with. I dare not disappoint them, lest they grow angry and turn upon the Tuans when my eye is not upon them."

"Your Highness," replied Mr. Trench, with a suavity surpassing that of the potentate, "your Highness overwhelms me, and there is nothing I would not do to oblige you. But I am very particular about my tigers. It's not every tiger I would deign to play with."

The Oriental mind of the Sultan appreciated the point raised by the white man. He knew he had his captive in a cleft-stick, but this parleying—sparring for time—was wholly in keeping with the Malay temperament. The longer the torturing could be extended, the better the fun from the potentate's point of view. Save for the extending of pleasure over as long a period as possible, time is of no account to the Malay.

"We fully appreciate the fastidiousness of the Tuan," agreed the Sultan. "Therefore we have brought hither many tigers—all good ones according to our humble ideas. But the Tuan shall choose his own!"

He waved his hand at the cluster of cages as he spoke.

"My chief minister will escort the Tuan, so that he may select a suitable tiger."

"My honored friend and associate, Mr. Carrington, will have to escort me too, your Highness," added Mr. Trench, decisively. "He's a better judge of such birds than I am myself, and invariably helps me to pick out my tigers!"

This was a man after the Sultan's heart. The calmness and the outrageousness of the "bluff" enchanted him.

"Of course, the Tuan will be assisted by his honored comrade," he readily assented.

"It is easy to see that he is a Tuan of much experience and skill in the selection of tigers!"



"BILL," said Mr. Carrington, *sotto voce*, as the two of them followed the grinning Bendahara to the tiger cages, "we're right up against it hard in this case—right UP—U double P, UP, with two blinking 'p's'! They're going to give you a bunch of crises and a spear, perhaps, and a *parang* to scrap against Stripes with, and you've got your revolver, which, being a Sunday-go-to-Meeting .38, ain't no more use again' a tiger nor a second-hand tooth-brush at Bunker Hill. I'll hang on to my own gun, so as to pot you fair if I see the game is done and they're only bent on torturing you. I'll pot myself, too; but, before I do that, I'll pot his nibs Suleiman, and likewise old Bendy here. None of these ducks will be able to get near me with a kris before I'll have coughed four shots into the brown of 'em!"

"Good egg, Aleck!" said Mr. Trench. "If I finish off one Stripes, they'll set another on to me. So I guess it's all over, bar the shouting. We've no time to talk now. Just dally over the tigers. Say they're dirty or something. Spar for time!"

"I'll spar all right, old Socks," said Mr. Carrington, "but they've got us by the neck! If we win out of this, Bill," he added convincingly, "his job-lots Suleiman will eat the tail of your tiger, hair and all! He'll — well eat it with the fur on, and by God, he'll eat it raw!"



MR. TRENCH was in the pit—a sun-burnt, clean-shaven, lithely built white man of some thirty-five Summers, with the narrow hips and clear-cut features of the well-bred Anglo-Saxon, and standing well over six feet in his canvas jungle boots.

He leaned against the wall, facing the aperture with the grille over it, through which the attendants had already dragged out the remains of the seladang and the first tiger. The clay floor had been scraped clean and strewn with rough sand from the shore of the adjacent estuary. The populace of Perkam clustered mutely in the padang—the children borne aloft on the shoulders of their parents, the better to view the battle.

The tiger-keepers merrily hauled a fresh

cage, containing a peculiarly irate tiger, down the declivity that led to the pit.

The tiger was not merely irate. It was humiliated, puzzled and bewildered. For an hour they had been sousing him with water and jabbing at his claws with improvised brooms that were dipped in water that stank to his unaccustomed nose. Mr. Carrington, as a final and most fantastic proviso to the fight, had insisted that the brute's claws should be aseptized as far as possible, by being swabbed out with a solution of Jeye's fluid. The Malays accepted the operation as a sacred rite—one calculated to ensure the white man's salvation when his head was clawed off—and therefore graciously acceded to the operation.

It was hygienic, and might have been useful, had Trench any chance of escaping with only a scratch or two; but the Sultan knew that such hygienic measures were purely acts of supererogation. He intended to see the white man eaten before the sun went down.

With elaborate graciousness, he had proffered his guest the choice of a kris from his own collection, or a spear from the palace armory, thus affording an additional opportunity for delay.

Trench and his companion had "hefted" scores of such weapons in a fair endeavor to find something that would hold a tiger at bay, and Trench now stood in the pit with an eight-foot spear in his fist, a pointed *parang* hanging from his belt, and a .38-caliber revolver, that was practically useless as a weapon against a tiger, in his hip-pocket.

It was nearly four o'clock in the afternoon. The day had been long and worrying. To the intense astonishment of the onlookers, the white man leaned back against the wall of the pit and, putting his hand to his mouth, yawned with an expression of absolutely unconquerable ennui.

The men with the tiger-cage were nearing the grille.

As soon as he had yawned, Trench stretched himself. Then he drew the heavy *parang* from its sheath and stuck it into the clay of the pit-side at an easy height for grasping.

Shouting most gleefully, the attendants slammed the cage into position at the aperture and raised the grille that gave entrance to the ring.

The tiger, cramped by long confinement, and unnerved by his recent bath, crouched low and snarled at the man in front of him. Trench grasped his spear and advanced to the center of the arena, his eyes fixed on the tiger. The latter did not stir a foot. It crouched, ready to spring.

Trench let his wits work quickly.

The tiger was as big as either of the others. To attack him from the front, while he was thus crouched, ready to spring, would be folly. The eye was the only vulnerable part of the animal that offered, and one blow of the brute's great paw would shiver the spear to atoms in the assailant's hands. To decide where to strike was a matter of life and death. It was also a matter of instants.

Trench waited.



THE Sultan, overhead and behind him, yapped out an order that the white man could not understand. Immediately a fresh gang of Malays came forward with charred bamboos—the ends of which still glowed red from the fire—and prepared to prod the reluctant tiger.

Shouts of exultant jocularly and encouragement to the tiger were raised on all sides. Above the alien din, Trench heard the deep bass tones of Aleck Carrington:

"Blind him, Bill! Blind him!"

The tiger's tail stretched out behind him, waving ever so gently. Gradually and slowly it began to curl. About six inches of the end twitched nervously. The brute was about to spring.

Joyously, from behind, the Malays thrust the smoking bamboos through the palisades. Suddenly Mr. Trench changed the spear from his right hand to his left, and, almost in the same motion, his revolver was whipped from his pocket, and two sharp cracks rang out above the storm of shouts and cheers.

The tiger roared, and sprang wildly forward—clean over Trench's head! As it did so, the white man dropped the revolver and thrust upward, fiercely, with the spear. Then he leaped aside nimbly, as the wounded animal banged helplessly into the wall of the pit behind him.

No sooner did it hit the earth than it recovered itself bravely, swirling round with the agility of a kitten to face its antagonist. Its fangs were bared, it roared ferociously; but it no longer glared at

Trench. Its eyes were ragged slits with blood oozing through the tightly-closed lids. It was now a blind tiger. Trench's shots had been well placed. The animal now only sensed his whereabouts. It could no longer see.

Roars of jubilation rose up skyward from the padang. The Malays were delirious with excitement. The little children squealed their plaudits.

In ordinary circumstances, there was not a man or woman present who would not have cheerfully and hospitably entertained Trench or Carrington with food and shelter—the best they could afford—and have solaced them in sickness or distress. But it would have been contrary to the Malay nature for any one in the gathering to be so far blind to his own and his friend's interests and enjoyment as to interfere on Mr. Trench's behalf and thus interrupt a fight between the white man and a tiger. The joy of the spectacle completely offset any suspicion of discourtesy in forcing the risk of it upon Mr. Trench.

Therefore they applauded enthusiastically. Their sporting instincts, whetted by the bouts between the seladang and the other two tigers, were now roused to the utmost. They exulted in the frightful wounds of this fresh tiger, because they rendered the contest more equal, and assured its longer duration. Even a blind tiger has a tremendous advantage over a human being, when the two are hemmed together in a circular pit not a dozen yards across.

 THE upward thrust of the spear had wounded the tiger in the side, but the wound was not serious. It had, however, given Trench a fair idea how stiffly the furry hide of the great creature resisted his weapon. Next time, he knew, he would have to thrust harder and more swiftly.

The tiger roared again in its furious agony and sprang directly at Trench. The man had barely time to leap aside to escape. The brute's paw swung out sideways as he swept past, and Trench felt the wind of it, so near was it to grazing him. He fully realized that one chance scratch from the claws on the end of that mighty forepaw would rip the muscles out of his arms like threads, and leave him a helpless prey to the enemy. He could afford to take no chances.

The jump to safety had brought him face to face with the stand that held the Sultan and Carrington.

Carrington nodded. His jaw was set. He was accustomed to tight places, and felt that the last chapter was closing on the adventures of Mr. Trench and himself; but he meant to finish up "with a few chips in hand," as he expressed it, "and chase into Paradise alongside Bill, and the Sultan Suleiman, and as many of the other — kings as he could lay out with a kick and six shots."

The Sultan Suleiman also nodded encouragingly.

"*Bagus, Tuan!*" said he—"Bravo, sir!"

The tiger sniffed the air, uncertainly, and pricked up his ears. The handicap of blindness was infuriating him. With tight-grasped spear Trench waited. The spear was a new weapon to him, but he was beginning to understand its usefulness. If he could drive it home once or twice, he would win out against one tiger at any rate, and then he might get respite for another day.

Again the tiger sprang. It sprang high and far. Trench stepped forward and stooped. Then as the bulk of the animal passed over him, he straightened out and drove the weapon home.

In a second it was jerked from his grasp, and he was swung bodily, like a stone from a catapult, half across the arena.

The tiger fell against the wall of the pit, almost directly below the Sultan, snarling and roaring in anguish and helplessness. The unfortunate brute had alighted from its spring, feet down. By some extraordinary stroke of fate, his paws had hit the handle of the spear which Trench had driven into his body, so that when he struck the ground, the spear was driven completely home, and the point of it now stood out a yard above his back. He tossed and tore helplessly for an instant, then seizing the butt of the handle in his teeth, gnawed it into splinters with one scrunch.

 THE cheers and shouts of the Malays now almost drowned the frantic roars of the persecuted brute.

Trench swept the perspiration from his face with his forearm, and dodged around behind the squirming tiger for the *parang* that he had stuck into the clay side of the pit.

"*Bagus! Bagus! Tuan!*" howled the Sultan and his excited courtiers.

"Keep it up, Bill, and we'll win out yet!" shouted Carrington.

Parong in hand, the white man rushed in to where the tiger writhed and flurried in its mad struggles to extract the torturing spear. Lifting the heavy blade, he slashed down on the brute's neck with all his might. Then, not a fraction of an instant too soon, he leaped back.

Blood spurted out from the wound in the tiger's neck and slopped over the yellow fur; but the hurt seemed not to agonize the creature so terribly as did the racking spear.

Trench held back and watched its continued struggles.

"A spear, Aleck!" he called to Carrington. "Tell those blighters to play square and pass us another spear!"

Carrington turned round to where three spear-men, clad in red, brown and yellow, stood in glittering glory behind Suleiman.

"Pass down one of them toothpicks!" he grunted, with an unmistakable gesture toward the man in the pit.

Radiant with smiles, the Sultan himself emphasized the order, and one of the guards hurried forward with his weapon to the bars of the cage and passed it down, handle first, to Trench.

The tiger still writhed and fretted in its torture.

Trench approached carefully and poised the fresh spear.

III



Boom!

Loud and clear from the bar in the Kuala, echoing back from the hills beyond the padang:

Boom!

The Sultan Suleiman looked around

nervously. The Bendahara hurried to his side. The red betel-juice from the old man's lips dribbled over the blue silk jacket of his ruler.

Boom!

From the crowds on the padang rose a howl of joy triumphant.

"Great Scott, he's done it!" grunted Carrington, and he raised his voice again in a cheer.

Down in the pit, Trench was drawing his spear from the side of the tiger, and getting ready for another stab. The luckless brute itself was lying over on its side motionless.

Trench had driven the blade in under the ribs and upward, and the point of it had rent the tortured animal's heart, and put it out of its misery.

He had heard nothing of the noise in the Kuala. He had neither thought nor sense for anything save the tiger until it was dead.

Boom!

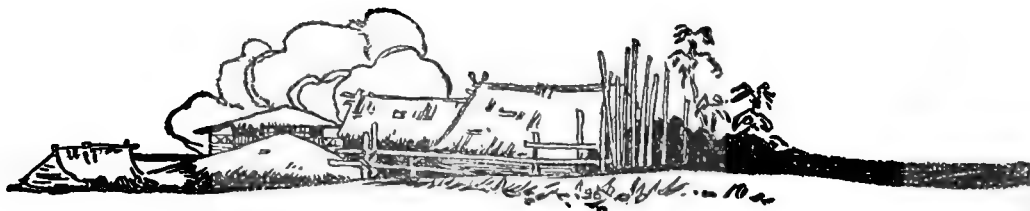
Trench turned around sharply.

"It's them, Bill!" shouted Mr. Carrington hilariously. "Salleh's made good, and that's a gunboat! We'll make old Suleiman smell Hell!"

With open arms and joyously, the Sultan and the Bendahara hurried down to the path that led to the arena, while the attendants hastily dragged away the empty tiger-cage.

"My noble and honored and most brave and distinguished friend!" glowed his Highness. "How can I repay your kindness in this display of your prowess to my people? Let us hurry to the Island and sign those concessions you have honored my kingdom by deigning to secure."

Boom! Impatiently, insistently, echoed the roar of the gun from the British warship in the Kuala.





THE GRENADIER

A Story of Mindanao

by Donald Francis McGrew

CHAPTER I

AN ORDER FROM THE GENERAL-COMMANDING

THE Grenadier looked at the General with a smile he could not suppress. He had just received orders relieving him from special duty at headquarters and, though still a captain, he was to take command of the post of Iligan, on the north coast of Mindanao. The thought warmed him with a glow like that of the sunshine outside the headquarters window.

To Iligan—to mystic Mindanao—to a scene of fights and action and relief from this cut-and-dried duty at headquarters! They had kept him there busy with musty papers while his own troop was busy chasing the scattered army of Aguinaldo through the island of Luzon, but now—now he would get action!

He permitted himself to smile again.

"No doubt you are pleased," said the General, his eye roaming over the Captain's figure, the superb military carriage of which had earned him the nickname, "The Grenadier." "It'll be up to you to make us smile in turn."

"Captain, the situation there is something like this: It is the country of the Mohammedan Moros, about the worst set of tribes we have on the islands, and, though they have so far taken no part in the insurrection, they are antipathetic to both the Chris-

tian Tagalogs and the Christian Americans.

"The outlaw Segundo, a Visayan with Visayan and Tagalog men, has been at large around the Bay of Iligan for some time, and the infantry stationed there, being handicapped by small numbers and the lack of horses, have been unable to chase him as far as they wished. For that reason also there have been no encounters with the Moros, who, I understand, sent word down that no one of the American race would be allowed to penetrate their country.

"The infantry have been unable to go that far. You, however, will of course use your own discretion in this, though you will by no means go out of your way to offend them. We want no extra trouble if we can help it.

"You, with I and K troops under you, will garrison Iligan; M and L go to Oroquito and Dapitan respectively. You will have with you, besides the regular officers, Lieutenant James Knox, assigned to your troop; Doctor Ames, contract surgeon, and Señor Segovia, a Spaniard with a touch of Visayan in him.

"He comes well recommended from General Lawton, having just helped him out quite a bit in the Nueva Ejica province. Formerly he was an insurrecto with Lacuna, I understand, having been forced into service as were a number of other Spaniards. But at his first opportunity he escaped and became an *americanista*. He used to travel for a Chinese merchant named Chung Toy

in the wholesale business, and so you'll have a man who knows all the islands, as well as being especially well acquainted with the country you are going to. Ought to make a good interpreter. Orderly," raising his voice, "send Señor Segovia in here.

"Now," he resumed, "that's all I can tell you. You will be monarch of all you survey, in a sense. What contingencies you are likely to encounter are as uncertain as dynamite. By all means get the families in if possible. Hang any one caught red-handed in murder. Lick those renegades and, in any pinch you encounter out of the ordinary, apply a little tincture of common sense as well as the Articles of War, and you'll come out all right. By all means get Segundo. You know what that means! Do you know Doctor Ames?"

"Yes, sir."

The Grenadier did not add, however, that he suspected him to be a victim of his own drugs and a disgrace to his profession.

"Very well. And Segovia? Ah, here he is now. Report to your new commander for duty, señor."

 THE Grenadier, without taking his perpetual, close-bitten, unlit cigar from his mouth, turned his smooth-shaven face toward the newcomer and looked him over. He was tall—almost as tall as the Grenadier himself. Probably due to his Spanish blood, thought the Captain. The hair was short, well-cropped and rose in a stiff pompadour above the high brow, while his face, though decidedly swarthy, showed unmistakable Castilian features. The nose was straight, the mouth rather wide, the cheeks slightly sunken. If it had not been for the close set of the black eyes, thought the Grenadier, his ready smile would have been pleasing.

He had an ingrained, unreasoning aversion for the Spaniards as a race, had the Captain, but he placed this in the background. The fellow's personality meant little as long as he proved an efficient interpreter and guide.

"You speak English, of course?" inquired the officer.

"Oh, yes," smiled Segovia. "I speak many languages."

"Good. I've got to go to the troop now, but I'll see you later on the *Doña Teresa*, señor. And, General," facing about once more, "I want to express my——"

"Tut, tut," snorted that crusty worthy. "Don't thank me. Get Segundo, that's all. You know what that means."

The Grenadier saluted and stepped out with a jauntiness born of exhilaration. Well did he know what it meant—promotion, a step higher; perhaps a dozen steps nearer the goal he had set his heart on.

Thinking of a General's star while still a Captain smacks of youth. But the Grenadier was at least a well-seasoned youth in years, for he had just passed his thirtieth birthday. And a Captaincy at thirty is not a bad mark, especially when you have gained that end through your own efforts and without any initial shove toward West Point from political sources.

Possibly this may have helped toward strengthening the antipathy some of the officers retained for the Grenadier, for your West Pointer holds somewhat aloof from one who comes up from the "cits" or the "ranks." But the Grenadier's own characteristics had a great deal more to do with it. He was a bit too cock-sure, a bit too assertive; a little inclined to believe that he and he alone could lead the best. He was direct, blunt, incisive, a quick thinker and a quick actor; and it follows in order that he was a quick speaker and a blunt one. The fact that he was nearly always right in his contentions did not help his popularity with those officers whose opinions he had disputed.

But those things did not worry the Grenadier in the least, as you might have guessed from a glance at his firm lips. No one had helped him up. He could swim very well alone. From his boyhood he had dreamed soldiering, thought of nothing but soldiering, was cut out for nothing but soldiering. Now his chance had come, and nothing else in the world mattered. He walked along with his great square, confident shoulders bulging straight out from his neck, and his chest curving out in more than the usual arrogance. It was not a strut. It was the solid, springy walk of a big-limbed, cock-sure military man. Yes, his chance had come. And he meant to make good.



THE news had reached the troop ahead of him, and the men, busy with shelter-tents, bedding-rolls and miscellaneous equipment, gave lusty voice to their exuberance. Here the Grenadier was rated at his true worth.

"Hoop la!" yelled one. "The old man's coming back!"

"Yes, and you'll have to soldier up to the handle now!"

"I'll know what I can do and what I can't do, anyway!"

"We'll feed now, by George!" declared another.

"And every one will do his little bit."

"Nor we won't have to look around with a candle for an officer whenever we get in a pinch."

First Sergeant Sanderson started to the orderly-room door to quiet the men.

The Grenadier held up his hand. "Let them warble, sergeant," said he with a rare smile. "I'm about as glad to get back as they appear to be to have me. Now—ah! How are you, lieutenant?"

He jumped up to greet First Lieutenant "Jimmy" Knox, his closest friend and chum.

"Say, how did you work it?" exclaimed the youngster when they had struck hands.

"You mean how I got you back to the troop? I had to do a little wire-pulling, but I got it through. You'll be in command of Troop K under me, as I'm to take command of the post, so let's get busy with these property-lists and get aboard."

They plunged into the business of moving the troop, which entailed detailing fatigue-squads, getting horses aboard, drawing extra ammunition, extra rations, and checking the lists as the stuff went aboard the huge "prairie-schooners" from the Q. M. corral.

Once the Grenadier looked up at the first sergeant and asked, "Do you know if any other troops are going to take these barracks right away, sergeant?"

"Not that I know of, sir."

"Then send a detail back here after dark and we'll load up these cots. Don't expect there's a cot for the men on the whole island of Mindanao right now. I'll send in a requisition for them when we get to Iligan."

Sanderson grinned under his mustache, and winked at the troop-clerk.

That individual mentally ejaculated, "Naw—I ain't glad the old man's back again—oh, no!"

Aloud he said, "Captain, about this requisition for those two machine-guns—do you want any extra repair-pieces for them?"

"Good suggestion, corporal. Of course we want them. Is there no requisition made out for them?"

"No, sir."

"H'm. That would take about two days, and we sail at nine." The Grenadier lit a fresh cigar and looked hard at the corporal. "Do you know the ordnance-sergeant, corporal?"

"Yes, sir."

"Here's a five-peso note. It's worth that out of my own pocket to get those pieces. Go over and see what you can do. He can fix up the requisition later, if he will."

The sergeant suppressed another grin of admiration at this new evidence of his Commander's characteristic resourcefulness, while the enthusiastic Knox, who was prejudiced strongly in the Grenadier's favor, made free to smack the table in a very unmilitary manner. His superior only grunted; and that night at nine the *Doña Teresa* steamed out toward Corregidor with the Grenadier and his two troops aboard.

CHAPTER II

AN OLD-WORLD TOWN AND THE SEÑORITA

THE third morning thereafter found the *Doña Teresa* riding at anchor in Iligan Bay, the smoke of her funnels drifting lazily away over a glassy sea to the north. The morning mists had risen and revealed Iligan encroaching close on the shore at the toe of a great horseshoe indenture, and the Grenadier, in company with his brother officers, came up from breakfast and viewed the new town with the quickening heart-beats of one who looks first on new fields of adventure.

A sweep of the eye showed him a gathering of white and yellow roofs sandwiched between two coconut-groves, while inland, behind the *barrio* and stretching along both arms of the bay into the north, rose heavily forested mountains, black against the sky. Cutting between the western grove and the *barrio* ran a river that emptied its tranquil flow into the bay at the northwest corner of town. Some distance east of this a depleted, weather-beaten dock jutted out over the water.

With its strip of golden beach, its blue bay, its surroundings of green foliage, the *barrio* presented an appearance similar in many respects to hundreds of other Filipino towns. But when one looks twice—and one always looks twice at Iligan—a difference makes itself felt as distinctly as a touch.

History has been in the making about it for four hundred years. The mystery of life and death in the East throbs in the pure air that swims above its nipa roofs. Armored legions have gone inland from it, never to return. Brass-cannoned galleons have ridden at anchor in her bay. Spaniards and Moros have given it a red setting for centuries. And looking at the undulating palms, the lowering inland mountains and the old stone fort, that rises at the mouth of the river like some dank prison from the sea, one's thoughts are immediately swept back to things medieval and sinister.

The Grenadier, turned dreamer for the nonce, muttered, "It's different from any *barrio* I've seen yet, Jimmy."

Then, with a short laugh at his lapse, "There's history been made here, they say. But, by George, I'll make some more! Come on, let's get down to business."

This entailed a hundred things during the course of that day.

On shore was a detachment of Volunteer infantry eagerly awaiting the opportunity to get aboard and start for "God's Country," their "time" being nearly up. But the boat had to be unloaded before they could begin putting their luggage aboard. The Spaniards had ruined the dock by taking off the top planks, so lighters had to be used to unload the baggage, while the horses and quartermaster mules had to swim ashore.

At Manila there had been hosts of quartermaster employees in the form of yokel Tagalogs to load the heavy boxes. But here the enlisted men realized the drawbacks to taking possession of a practically deserted *barrio*. A healthy growl arose from the men as they contemplated a day of box-lifting under the broiling sun.

The Grenadier, however, "sized up the proposition" in quick order and shifted the men into shape for the quickest and easiest execution of the work. Since the horses and mules were stabled on the upper spar-deck, they were unloaded first by means of a canvas sling, a swinging crane and a hitch on the drum of a donkey-engine. Once in the water, the slip-knot was flipped loose, the animals released. They were then allowed to swim ashore, where a detail caught them by halters previously fastened about their heads.

Following that, the deck hatchways were opened and the lighters tugged alongside by means of hawsers stretched from boat to

shore. Details were sent into the hold to place the baled hay, oats, ammunition-boxes and lockers in the slings. When the work was well started and the donkey-engines began their snorting exhaust as the loads were swung from hold to lighters, the Grenadier placed Second Lieutenant Grimes in charge, summoned the interpreter—Señor Segovia—Lieutenants Bronson, Knox, Graham and Vorhees, and went ashore in the ship's launch.

 THERE was much hand-shaking between Lieutenant Howard of the detachment and the regular officers, and when the orderlies had wiped the horses dry and dug out the officers' saddles from the pile of equipment, Howard volunteered to take them about town. Mounting, they rode up the beach to the Moro market-place, a mere shed with no floor or sides, and turned south on the main street. This crossed a deep moat running along the front of the fort, and was skirted to the west by an open parade. Here the Spanish had been wont to hold their evening formations, while across the street from this open sward was the plaza, studded with trees and marked by a bandstand long disused. The street was lined on both sides with frame and nipa shacks, none of them over two stories in height and the majority built flush with the street. There were no sidewalks. Everywhere the houses proclaimed a shuttered silence and the horses' feet echoed queerly as they rode along.

"Feels like a graveyard," grunted the Grenadier, his eyes taking in detail after detail. "Now, let's ride over to the fort first. Want to look at it."

They found the interior a square white room of whitewashed stone, with a shelf running round it near the roofless top that had at one time been used as a stand for Spanish riflemen. The Grenadier glanced at the improvised beds on the earthen floor.

"Been using this for a squad-room?" he inquired.

"Yes," grinned Howard, "though the men have been kicking about the bugs. Only a few slept here. We had to use the convent for a barracks."

"Humph. Well, we've got lots of coal-oil. This will do for a guard-house when we get it policed up. Been using the convent, you say? Let's go down and see it."

"All right. It's south of here."

They cut across the parade and into the next street west of the main *calle*. This ran close to the river and passed one of the biggest buildings in the town—a Catholic church built of unpainted bohuka planks. Near it stood a smaller building, the convent, while before the great Gothic doors of the church was a four-spiled framework, to which were fastened several antiquated bronze bells. The Grenadier dismounted, passed under this and pulled at the doors.

"Can't very well open them," Howard spoke up. "They've got the inside all barricaded with mahogany logs and a trench dug behind them."

"Who did that?"

"The natives, when the insurrection first broke out. That's the way we found it when we took the town."

Finding a crack, the Grenadier peered in at the poorly lighted interior, noted the earthen floor, the trenches, the logs piled breast-high and snorted in disgust. "Good pit for rifles," he said, "but one good field-gun would blow them all out in five minutes. *Fine* place to use for a fort, too!"

He looked at the balconies running round the sides of the building, saw that the altar and immense pipe-organ at the south end were untouched, and came away.

"Let's see the convent next," he said, and followed Howard into the building.

The littered condition of this once sequestered place spoke ill for the detachment's mode of soldiering, but the new Commander said nothing, only grunting,

"We'll change this as soon as possible. How many people did you say were left in town?"

"Not over a dozen. There's Sun Tung, a Chinese merchant up on the main *calle*. He owns the canteen. Father Jacques arrived here in a *banca* a few days ago—that's his house you see over there," pointing out the window. "Then there's a Spanish girl—Señorita Carmencita is her name, I'm told. She owns a plantation near here and she just got in from Manila with some of her *muchachos*. Wish I was going to stay," with a laugh, "for she's just about as pretty as they make 'em back home."

"So?" grinned Jimmy Knox. "Well, I'm sorry for you—but maybe Segovia here knows her?"

Segovia up to this time had kept in the

background, merely answering when spoken to. Now, as the Grenadier turned to him, he thought the Spaniard's eyes narrowed a trifle. The impression was but fleeting, however, for Segovia's ready smile came into play.

"Oh yes, I know the señorita. That is, I know of her, like every one else. She is quite notable."

"Notorious?"

"You mistake me. Notable, not notorious. She is of the *grande* family, señor, and very well educated—a good high lady, as you call it."

"Well, I'll see the good lady in time. And that priest, too. Lieutenant," addressing Howard, "I won't trouble you further. You'll want to get back to your men. You had three outposts, you say, on three sides of town? I'll get the lay of the land and may change the positions, anyway."

"All right," said Howard. "*Adios* and good luck."



"TAKE a drink in Frisco for me," called irrepressible Jimmy. The other waved his hand gaily.

Then the group resumed their ride about town, and beyond it, where they noted the trench thrown up by the Spanish, the river ford, the cross-roads and the available necessary places for outposts. Infantrymen of the detachment were found on three of these and the Grenadier sent his orderly back with orders to the sergeant of the guard to relieve them.

With the "lay" of the town and vicinity fixed in his mind the new Commanding Officer rode back up the river street.

"This open site along the river north of the church here will be a good place for the new barracks I have in mind," he decided, "so I want to find a place for our own quarters, Jimmy—something with a board floor and with two stories so I can arrange temporary headquarters down-stairs and use the up-stairs for sleeping purposes. It must be close to the new barracks, too, for I want to be in touch with them at all times."

"How about this place, then?" suggested Knox, pointing at a pretentious *hacienda* surrounded by a high bamboo fence. "Just the right distance from the convent, the new site for the barracks, and not far from the guard-house."

"Looks vacant now. Segovia, do you know who lived there?"

"No, señor."

"Well, we'll go in and see. It looks all right from here."

So saying, the officer dismounted in company with Segovia and Knox, and led the way through the gate.

They found the yard unkempt and deserted, and strode on to the door, where they knocked lustily. No one answered, so the Grenadier pushed in, finding himself in a large, high-windowed room. There were several pieces of furniture, among them a case of books, placed about the room, scattered as though not yet arranged to the owner's taste. A heavy rug thrown over a chair and a mop near by showed that some one was preparing to put the house in order. And as their spurred heels jingled on the floor, they heard a frightened squawk from a room to the right, where they discerned a native woman coming in with a pail of water.

This she let drop, staring at them with wide eyes. Segovia called out to her in Spanish, then stopped short with a muffled exclamation, for on the stairway appeared a vision that drew all eyes instantly toward her.

The Grenadier's subconscious impressions of Spanish women had been gained through the inspection of the stiff portraits commonly seen on cigar-boxes. His repugnance for that type of woman was marked, and those he had come in contact with during his stay in Manila had done little to alleviate that antipathy. Their black eyes repelled him with the glint of a rat's. Every feature, every action, struck him as distinctly foreign to all he had cherished as beautiful and wholesome. As Todd put it, "The Grenadier likes the Greasers from the head up and the feet down," which inelegant but characteristic statement fitted the case exactly.

Hence, when he saw this girl, it is not remarkable that she attracted a look from him bordering on the incredulous.



THE cast of her nose, the veriest hint of olive in her cheeks, the dark-lashed, deep-brown eyes were assuredly Spanish. But beyond that she refuted every impression that had formed his antagonism. Her hair was a glory, a wealth of burnished copper braids that

shone in spots with the gloss of the sun upon the harvest corn. The width between her eyes, the curve of her mouth, the clear complexion, all fitted in perfectly with the average American's ideal of wholesome beauty. She was tall, but not too tall, decided the Grenadier—would probably be able to look straight into his eyes if she stood on tiptoe.

Her form showed the rounded lines of a girl just blossoming into full womanhood, suggesting an ability to wear exquisite gowns without ostentation, and bearing no hint of future ungainly opulence. And as she stood there during that startled instant, looking down upon them, she suggested numberless pleasant dainty things made doubly dear to a man who has been long in the bush.

But only for an instant did she appeal in that light. Jimmy whistled low. The Grenadier found his hat in his hand. Segovia called out to her in Moro, a tongue which neither of the officers understood. Instantly she changed from the questioning girl to the haughty señora of the household, while her eyes grew cold and scornful as they played over the "cursed *americanos*."

The Grenadier's cap went back on his head with a clap. "What's that you said to her?" he demanded, turning upon Segovia.

"I speak to her in Moro, Captain—tell her not to be afraid."

For some reason the officer was strangely nettled—perhaps because it is not pleasant to gaze upon a vision and have it change in a flash to a statue of cold stone. However, though he could not diagnose the cause of his discomfiture, Segovia got the full brunt of it.

"After this," he snapped, "speak in Spanish unless you're addressing Moros. Now—"

"I will speak the English to the Captain if he so wish," said the girl on the stairway.

"So?" exclaimed the Grenadier, wheeling. "That makes it much easier, madam. I am the new Commanding Officer here. We were just looking for a place for headquarters—that is, temporary headquarters, you see. I beg your pardon for intruding."

"It is granted," she said coldly. And somehow her manner nettled the officer still further.

"Thank you," he said icily. "Might I inquire if this is your own home?"

She merely bent her head.

"Then might I ask if you have another building near here we could use as an office? I don't care to crowd any one out of his home when he returns."

"I have nothing for the *americanos*—no!"

"The — you haven't!" was his mental ejaculation. But outwardly he remained civil.

"I take it from that," he said, "that you are antagonistic to the Americans. In that case you will be required to follow out the line of procedure I've laid out for every Spaniard or Filipino that desires to stay in this town. As soon as I get headquarters established, madam, I'll expect you and every one of your *hombres* to come down and take the oath of allegiance. If you don't, you'll leave town. Good day, madam."

He turned away from those cold eyes and went out the door. His had been the last word, but he felt, somehow, that he had been badly routed in the brief encounter.

CHAPTER III

FATHER JACQUES THE GOOD

"**S**AY," commented Jimmy, when they were in the yard, "she *loves* us—what? Juno and—"

The Captain growled something unintelligible deep in his throat, and Jimmy, placing his hand over his mouth, winked at Segovia. But the mirth died on his face as he noted the two high-colored spots in Segovia's cheeks.

"H'm," was Jimmy's mental comment, "I smell a rat. This Segovia chap has fallen heavy for this dame previously—some *time* previously. He don't like the way the Grenadier went at her, eh? I'll just see for myself."

"Say," he said, catching Segovia by the arm, and speaking low, "didn't you say you just knew of this Carmencita dame and that was all?"

Segovia's color heightened, but he looked full at the lieutenant before replying. "Does the *teniente* put a card on his back with his thoughts of all women printed thereon?" he inquired.

"Nuff said," gasped Jimmy. "Only, I'll give you this pointer—tell her not to get too high and mighty with our hero, old chap, or there'll be wailing and gnashing of teeth

in her domicile; take it from me. All right, Captain; we're coming."

They rode on down the street toward the fort, and at the edge of the parade found a two-story building that answered their purpose admirably. From here the Grenadier despatched the officers to the troops with directions for storing the headquarters and quartermaster safes and office equipment in the building, and designated the quarters for the enlisted men.

A vacant house next the headquarters building would serve for the second lieutenants as well as Señor Segovia. The Grenadier would take the upper story of the big dwelling, in company with Knox, First Lieutenant Grimes and the medical officer. On account of the shortage of officers Grimes would be required to assume the combined duties of adjutant and quartermaster.

The convent would quarter both troops temporarily. Another empty shack was to be used as a hospital and quarters for the three men of that corps who had accompanied the expedition. This shack would do for a temporary storehouse. The horses and mules would have to be stabled in the open near the convent for the time being. Then, having completed his directions, the Grenadier called Segovia.

"You say this Sun Tung is the chief merchant here?"

"*St, señor.* He owns half the country near by."

"He's the man I want to see, then. We'll ride over there."

They found his place on the main *calle*, a big building combining within its spacious walls a meat-market, a tailor-shop, a grocery and a saloon. Sun Tung seemed to be stocked with all things salable or tradable in the tropics, his floors and shelves being loaded with everything from plows to sewing-needles.

A Tagalog clerk came forward to meet them.

"Ask him where Sun Tung is," the Grenadier directed Segovia. While they spoke in Spanish the officer's eyes were running over the miscellaneous articles, and he commented, "Whisky—bottles and bottles of it. Well, if I destroyed it, the men would drink *tuba* and *beno*—and that's worse. And—"

"He says Sun Tung will come back maybe to-night—he is off toward Cagayan."

"All right. Tell him I want to see him when he comes back. I see there's a big ice-box back there—where does he get the ice?"

Segovia explained that Sun Tung had installed an ice-manufacturing plant about a year before; it was situated, he said, on the river-bank near the ford. He had pointed it out that afternoon.

"I forgot," nodded the Grenadier. "Come on; I want to see that priest. Then we'll return to our quarters. You'll tell this clerk, though, to tell Sun Tung I want to see him as soon as he returns. Understand that's not a request. It's an order, so make it plain."

Having delivered this ultimatum to the impressed clerk, Segovia followed the officer into the street. Mounting, they rode south once more, toward the priest's abode.

"Do you know this holy man?" inquired the soldier.

"I have met—that is all. I—you see, I am not much for the Church."

"So?" commented the other. "Well, I am," very shortly. "For good churches and good priests. Does Father Jacques speak English?"

"I am not so sure," said Segovia after a moment's hesitation. "I don't think—"

Just here an orderly rode up and saluted the officer. "Lieutenant Grimes's compliments, sir, and he wishes the Commanding Officer would send the interpreter down to the beach. There are a half dozen Tagalogs there just in from Cagayan, and he wants to hire them but can't make them understand."

"Very well. Segovia, you'd better go down there. And, orderly, you tell Lieutenant Vorhees, the officer of the day, to place them in the guard-house for the night. I want to interview them. Go ahead, Segovia. Since the priest can speak English I'll manage with him."

The Spaniard opened his lips to speak, thought better of it, and rode off. The Captain reined toward the father's manse.



IT WAS an odd room into which he was admitted, more in keeping with the tastes of a recluse and a scholar than those of a father to whom life is all dogma. Instead of the plain white-walled room with nothing but the usual portraits of the Christ and the Virgin Mary, the Grenadier saw books and paintings and

tapestries, while his feet sank deep in the softest of Persian rugs. As in the home of the Spanish girl, however, the room showed that it had but recently been reoccupied. The father was in the act of hanging a picture over a deep scar in the wall when the Grenadier knocked.

"This is Father Jacques?" said the officer, advancing into the room.

"Yes, Father Jacques. And you are——"

"The new Commanding Officer, father."

Heavy vines at the windows darkened the room, and he peered closer for a better view of the holy man.

"My vines are sometimes a drawback," the priest apologized. "But there—that is better!"

The taper spluttered, then flamed up, and for the instant both men fell silent, each studying the other.

No two men could have been more widely divergent in physical make-up. The father was of medium height and slight build. The officer was tall, heavy, superbly military. Looking at the face below the priest's white-encircled poll, you would have been impressed at once by its wholesome, trustworthy goodness; while your eyes fell first on the cut of the Grenadier's jaw and the strength of the lips that closed tight about his habitual cigar. Though they were neither cruel nor sensual, they were strong and calm and positive, which was the Grenadier all over; while the priest, though far from being a weak character, showed in his name and address the temperament of a recluse.

In one point they were alike, for you would have considered neither handsome save when they smiled, the officer's level-browed, straight-nosed face being too stern and austere for a youth of thirty, while the other's was too wrinkled and sad. The father had the better of the Grenadier in this, however, the kindly light in his eyes going far toward a smile at all times, whereas the youth's smiles were rare.

He smiled now in agreeable surprise. "I came expecting to find some one a bit different," he declared. "But I think you'll talk straight from the shoulder."

"I have nothing to hide, my son. Take the chair and tell me your errand."

"I will," said the youth, sitting down. "I came to find out just how far your sympathies would carry you in the matter of this Segundo, and how far you'd go if I

brought the families back into this town."

Father Jacques looked him fair in the eyes. "My sympathies are of course with my children, Captain. They think they are right. Can you blame them?"

"I hadn't thought of it in that light. My business is to whip them, or to let them come in and take the oath of allegiance and lay down their arms. The clergy have a wonderful influence over the Visayans and the Tagalogs, and, if you will, you may help me out a lot in convincing them that coming in will be the best move for them to make. They can not hope to beat us, for we are too big for them both financially and in numbers—and stamina.

"I understand that Segundo, of course, would never lay down his arms, and I will get him. But I expect that the others will. However, there are two drawbacks to letting them come in—one the fear that they may be prone to plot a massacre, the other that they would try to send supplies out to Segundo. You will readily see that this would shorten my chances of nailing Segundo. I wouldn't allow them to come in if it were not that I think you fair. That is, I don't think you will do as some of the priests have done—incite the natives to a massacre, and help them out by holding fake funerals over caskets loaded with rifles."

"I will give you my promise on that, Captain. I believe in fair warfare, not slaughter. You are right about some of the people wanting to come in and live peaceably. It is only fair of you to give them that chance."

"I'll do it. I'll be as fair as you. Now, can you give me a little information? I never saw this Segundo, and I'd like to know what he looks like."

"That seems hardly fair, my son!"

The Grenadier flushed. "That's right, father! I won't ask you to give any information, then, nor to give up what you learn in the confessional. I know how that is—for, you see, I'm a Catholic myself."

This pleased Father Jacques mightily, and went far toward upholstering the good opinion he had already formed of the blunt Grenadier. He was cast in a rough mold, as were his brother officers, but the father saw something clean and strong within him—far different from the few American officers he had met officially. He placed his wrinkled hand on that of the youth.

"I knew you would not ask me, son, when you thought twice. However, I can say this much: I do not know Segundo, nor have I ever seen him as Segundo. That I might have seen him under another name is very probable—these are strange times, Captain. I have just come down from Manila, where I stayed from the time of the Spanish evacuation until now. As soon as the Spanish left, one Tal Placido with his men took the town. Against my wishes they made a fort of the church, as you have no doubt seen. In the end they drove me from the *barrio*. Aguinaldo could not choose all his officers personally, or no doubt such a man as Tal Placido would not have been placed in command. He is a short man, very thick in the paunch, very brutish at heart. Since then I hear that this Segundo has been placed over his head in command, but I do not know him."

"And Tal Placido drove you out of the town, eh?"

"And destroyed some of my property. You see the walls," said the priest, waving his hand about the room. "Some of my best books—I have but few left now."

"And the town-people—what were they doing? Why didn't they help you?"

"They are deathly afraid of the guerrillas, Captain. And after all, they are but children."

"Humph! And you've been here how long?"

"Many years, my son."

"Giving them your life-work, and then they let those dogs run you out, eh? Well——"

"They are but children," Father Jacques repeated softly.

"'Children' is right!" was the officer's thought.

Nor did he miss the inference of that simple sentence. The light behind those kindly eyes shone forth with a true nobility. Thereafter, when thinking of him, the Grenadier remembered that sentence. "For," he thought, "it's a mighty good thing to get out of life—the thought that you've known one *good* man."

"And they tore up your rooms, too?" he asked, aloud.

"Yes, Captain."

The Grenadier was silent a moment, for he was thinking of the prosperous condition of Sun Tung's store as contrasted with the depleted state of most of the

houses. Father Jacques's house had been rifled of all that was wanted. Sun Tung had not been molested. He made a note of that mentally, and arose to go.

"I'll see you again. And you may rest assured you won't be molested at any time. I'll attend to that. And I'll be at mass every Sunday hereafter, as soon as the church is fixed up. I'll attend to that, too."



FATHER JACQUES was on the point of thanking him when a knock sounded at the door. He opened it to receive Segovia, and the Grenadier could not fail to note the involuntary twitch of disgust that crossed the priest's face. Although he regained himself and became the father on the instant, the kindly light had gone from the eyes.

"Come in," said the priest in Spanish. "What is it you wish, Señor Alvaro?"

"Alvaro?" grunted the soldier. "Thought your name was Segovia?"

Segovia smiled. "One has to carry more than one name in these times, Captain. Alvaro or Segovia—what does it matter? Alvaro was my name when I travel aroun' for the merchant business. So Father Jacques know me."

"I see. What is it you want?"

"I thought the Comandante would need me, since I finish down at the beach."

"Well," the Grenadier decided. "I'll be with you in a minute. Just at present I have not finished with Father Jacques."

When he had gone out the door the officer turned to the father.

"Do you know that fellow very well?" he asked.

"More of what I have heard of him than from actual dealings. But it is enough. He—the language of the devil knocks oftenest at his heart where women are concerned, Captain. And he mocks at the Church."

"Is he prone to travel under many names?"

"I only knew him under the one."

"He's no good morally, then? Is that all you know about him?"

"Yes, Captain."

"I ask because I know him only from the General's recommendation. Didn't think he'd be much morally when I first looked at him myself, but if that's all that's against him I can use him. I suppose it's the

Spanish in him led him to take sides with us, or ——"

"The money."

"Probably that's more like it. Good-by, father."

"Adios, son—come and see me again."

Outside the door the interpreter joined him, and on the way to headquarters asked him a few casual questions in regard to his talk with the priest, but the Grenadier was busy with his new plans and gave him short answers.

As he had told the father, he intended following the General's orders in regard to calling in the families. A message, the General believed, would serve to bring in all those Tagalog merchants and farmers who had no desire to shoulder a rifle for the cause with Segundo's *ladrones*, for with the assurance of American protection from both Segundo and the Moro *datos* they would regard the life in town as infinitely more desirable than sleeping in the ant-infested bush.

Furthermore, the General held that they were on the order of children and that they should be brought in and shown the benefits of the American rule. It would go farther than rifles, he declared, in quelling the insurrection.

But in looking at it from the soldier's standpoint alone, the situation had at first appealed in this wise to the Grenadier:

Since the Moros were hostile to the Tagalogs (the term Moro must not be confused with the name Filipino) this restricted the Tagalogs to that neutral zone about Iligan Bay, the Moros living farther inland. The fear of both Americans and Moros kept the Tagalogs constantly on the move, and enforced migration bodes ill for agricultural pursuits. Without mangos, rice, fish and *camotes* the most bloodthirsty Filipino will soon lose his desire for fight, and, reasoning along these lines, it looked as though keeping the Filipinos out of town would bring Segundo to terms.

He might easily have contrived to have the message miscarry, regardless of the General's orders, and would have done so had he thought the plan the most feasible. But as he went over it, it appeared in new lights.

If Segundo were cut off from supplies at Iligan, he might find it easier to get them in the vicinity of Oroquito and Dapitan on the west side of the bay, or, what was more

probable, from Monticao and San Salvador, both on the east side and both ungarrisoned. This would drive the outlaw within the reach of the troops at Cagayan, and so deprive the Grenadier of his big chance.

In letting them come in, he would be obeying orders to the letter, and would probably keep Segundo where he stood the best chance of getting supplies. For, reasoned the youth, it was a hundred to one bet that the Filipinos would utterly disregard the oath of allegiance once they had regained the town, and would immediately start smuggling the food out at night.

In that case he not only stood a chance of catching some of the chief smugglers and insurrectos, but he might also force those caught to tell him of Segundo's exact whereabouts at the time. Knowing this, it would not be a hard matter to steal up to his hiding-place and capture him.

So that night, after settling the positions of the new posts, the Grenadier talked over the situation with Segovia and Jimmy Knox.

"What do you think of letting the people come in, Segovia?" he asked.

"It is decidedly the best," said the interpreter. "A ve-ery good plan."

"Then to-morrow you start out with an escort and round up all you can find. Tell them they can come in if they'll agree to take the oath of allegiance and lay down their arms. Then——"

"It would be better not to take the American soldier along, for whenever you encounter the Filipinos in a small party they would run away."

"But won't the guerrillas be liable to cut you up?"

"Not when they hear the message."

"You're right. But I want you to go up around Lake Lanao, when you have passed the word around, and tell the Moros that I have much fish, lots of rice and many pesos for good Moros who will come in at once and help build these new barracks and storehouses."

"But won't the Tagalogs be enough to build them?"

"Not on your life. I'm not paying out any money that will stand a chance of helping out Segundo. The Moros at least have caused no trouble as yet, and this may keep us on good terms with them. Furthermore, these Tagalogs have got to show me they're *bueno* Americans before I give them any

work. Be ready to start in the morning."

"I will go to-night, señor," said Segovia.

He left them getting ready to "roll in" on their canvas cots.

"That Chinaman hasn't shown up yet, but I'll send after him in the morning," said the Grenadier, yawning.

"How did you find the priest?"

"He's all right. Don't want him bothered at any time."

"Bother him? Oh, no. But I know some one that is bothered," said the irrepressible Jimmy.

"Who?" the Grenadier asked sleepily.

"That Segovia boy about that Carmencita dame."

"Oh, go to sleep," growled the other. "You're always thinking about women."

The irrepressible chuckled. His Captain fell asleep, and dreamed pleasant dreams in which he captured Segundo a dozen times over and in each case was promoted. Only one thing disturbed his dreams. Possibly because the last waking sound he had heard was the mention of her name, the Grenadier was alternately warmed and chilled throughout them by a brown-eyed, graceful girl who appeared about to smile, then suddenly froze him with cold and disdainful mien.

CHAPTER IV

CARMENCITA AND AN INSURRECTO

IT IS quite possible that the Grenadier might not have dreamed so happily—nor Segovia smiled so often—had he overheard that worthy's conversation soon after leaving headquarters. Segovia slipped along through the darkened streets, pushed noiselessly through the wicket gate at Carmencita's *hacienda* and, peering through one latticed window, saw that Carmencita had not yet retired. Then he knocked lightly upon the door.

A *muchacho* opened it stealthily. "Madre de Dios!" he exclaimed in diminishing cadence.

"You fool," gritted Segovia in Spanish, "let that be the last word of that sort from you! Be quiet. What you see is a lie, do you hear?"

The yokel acquiesced with a frightened nod.

"Then begone! I would talk with the Señorita Carmencita."

The girl had been watching him quietly from her chair, but when the *muchacho* disappeared, and she saw the light on the face of the advancing Segovia, she stopped him with a gesture.

"*Carissima!*" he said hoarsely.

"No, no!" she declared, in contradiction to her blush.

He seized her hand, but she arose and drew away.

"What is it you came to say?" she asked hurriedly. "Quick! Who knows but that an *americano* patrol may drop in here at any time? From what I saw of him this afternoon that Captain is capable of anything."

"Do not worry!" said Segovia, giving up the quest for the hand at last and dropping with a laugh on the chair. "If he found me here now he would only think I came to say good-by to my sweetheart. And is that not true?"

She ignored this. "Tell me—what are your plans—Señor Segundo?"

"Segovia, girl, Segovia—at least for the present. You say he is capable of anything, but he would not feel so capable if he knew Segovia was the very Segundo he is hunting. Ha! It is the exquisite joke, eh?"

"I think you are taking great chances."

"Bah! Not a one of the people that know me would give me up. They are afraid of what would visit them if they did. I will not have to preserve my incognito for long, however."

"What is it you expect to do?" she asked eagerly.

"A kiss and I will tell you."

"A kiss? A kiss? Is that all you think of when——"

"How could I think of other things with those lips before me, Carmencita?"

But the girl was impatient of his flattery.

"I have not thought of you in that way, nor do I hope to," she declared. Suddenly confronting him, she said quickly, "I have my heart in the cause with you, Señor Segovia-Alvaro-Segundo, but that is different from having the heart with you alone. Please do not presume upon it. I am willing to cooperate, to help in any way I can and that you may see fit for me to follow. For why should I not be with the Cause? I find on my return all my warehouses and hemp burned, my plantations robbed, everything ruined save the rice-paddies. I hate the *americanos* who have done this—hate every bar in their flag. If there is any way I can

help, command me. But further than that I can not—can not go."

During her declaration the color had heightened in her cheeks. Segundo, the rebel chief, feasting his black eyes upon her beauty, smiled in admiration. "You are beautiful—do you know that?" he said when she had finished.

"Will you not be serious?"

"Very well," he said. "Now listen." And he proceeded to outline the course the Grenadier had planned.

"In a few days you will see the town filled again with the people," he smiled, "and nearly all our friends. Those who are not our friends would better be! They will be quiet. Sun Tung will then have plenty of help to send out the supplies."

"Which the people will pay for?"

"Why should they not? Every one is with the cause."

"And then?"

"Well, what is to prevent my guiding the *americanos* into a nest—a nice feathery nest full of Filipino quills, eh? Would it not be droll to have Segundo take the *americanos* into a fight against Segundo, and see them all die?"

She shuddered, looking somewhat dubious. "It does not seem—does not seem—quite——"

"It is war," he said.

"Well, yes, I suppose so. And now, what would you have me do?"

"I have not decided yet," he said, rising. "Just how this will work out, just what plans I may make in the next few days, are not clear as yet. When I return I will tell you, and then, when I leave the *americanos*, or should I be detected before the plans mature, there may be work for you to do."

He paused and looked at her before leaving. The ardor that crept into his eyes compelled her gaze. A certain reluctant thrill of admiration went through her, for assuredly he made a notable picture standing there, with his white teeth showing in that captivating smile.

Could one have disassociated Segundo from the atrocities he had been credited with, he would have appealed deeply, and Carmencita gave him full credit for being without fear at least. His very daring and coolness could not but attract a woman, and yet—here her thoughts joined telepathic hands with the Grenadier—Segundo's eyes were too close together. And now, as they

glowed anew and he stepped toward her, the girl shrank back instinctively.

But a knock came again at the door. Both wheeled, looked quickly at one another. Then, with a finger on her lips, Carmencita stepped forward.



"WHO is it?" she called in Spanish, bending close to the door to hear.

"Father Jacques."

"I was just on the point of retiring, father," began the girl.

Segundo spoke up:

"Let him in. I intended seeing him before leaving, anyway."

The door swung open, and the priest stepped in, blinking before the light.

"I know it is late, child," he apologized, "but I—Ah! Señor Alvaro!"

Carmencita looked quickly from the priest to the guerrilla. Did Father Jacques not know Segundo? Segundo's love for the theatrical stopped her exclamation.

"Señor Alvaro, yes—then Señor Segovia—but to all who love the Cause, *El Capitan Segundo!*"

And Segundo bowed ironically.

"Segundo?" whispered the priest. "You, Segundo? Then what—"

"You have been too long acquainted with my delinquencies, as you choose to call them, to be surprised now, father," said Segundo with an easy smile. "Come, sit down a moment. I want you to tell me just what you told the American this afternoon."

Father Jacques collected himself.

"So that is why you were so anxious to be with us? I should have known, I should have guessed. What—"

"You have not told me what you said," Segundo insisted.

"I told him nothing that would not bear the light."

"For instance?"

Father Jacques remained coldly silent, whereupon Segundo made a suggestive movement toward his holster.

Carmencita stepped forward. "For shame!" she cried. "Would you threaten a priest?"

"Peace, child," gently admonished the old man. He addressed Segundo quietly. "I had thought that our cause chose a wicked instrument in the form of Tal Placido, Captain. Have you come to be worse than he? It would seem I had cause to turn my heart away from the people, under such treat-

ment. I told the American fairly where my sympathies were, and he answered as fairly. He is an honest man and will prove a true fighter—one whom perhaps it would be well for you to copy, Señor Segundo. He agreed not to force anything from me that was told in confessional and, beyond that, to give back the church. He is a fair enemy."

Somewhat shamefacedly the guerrilla shoved back the pistol, though the telltale spots of rage burned in his cheeks. Carmencita feared for the priest during the next few seconds. But Segundo could submerge his personal feelings where he had an end to gain. He thought long before speaking.

It was manifest that Father Jacques was sincere in his sympathies for the cause, albeit he would not sanction the despicable means he, Segundo, had in mind to further that cause. It would be best not to be too candid in laying out his plans before the father then, nor would it be advisable to antagonize him further. Segundo knew that the people feared him as much as they admired him, while the father's sway was through love alone. It would be better to have his help than to have him remain neutral.

"I will apologize," he said, feigning humbleness. "My zeal for the cause sometimes carries me too far in these times when some of the people are wavering toward the *americanos*. I am glad to know that you are with us openly."

"I believe the cause is right, my son. Tell me, though, how you expect to benefit through this double rôle?"

Glancing quickly at Carmencita, Segundo replied easily:

"That is one of the fair games of war, father. It keeps me in touch with his plans, will enable me to keep my men out of his reach until I get the new supplies of ammunition and am able to meet him in a battle and defeat him decisively. When the ammunition comes, then we will be fixed for him. Until that time I am forced to rely on you town-people to keep me in supplies. I am on my way now to start the word for the people to come in."

"I will help all I can," promised the father.

Segundo thanked him and, bowing to Carmencita, said, "May I have a word with the señorita before going?"

Somewhat reluctantly she accompanied him to the door and stopped in the arbor out of the father's hearing.



"WHATEVER we do," warned Segundo, "we must keep the plans away from Father Jacques through the confessional. That is, any plan like an ambush which he might not approve of. You will tell your *hombres* that I, Segundo, order this, under penalty of death. I will pass the word among those who come into town—no confessional until after the plans have gone through. It might not appeal to his sense of right."

She nodded her acquiescence and stepped back toward the door. But in a flash Segundo's arms were around her, and she felt his hot lips on hair and cheeks. He sought her lips, but she tore away from him, panting, "No, no!" and, when he again clutched at her, she stepped to the door as though to call to the father for protection.

Emotion had stained her cheeks, made her eyes starry, played sad havoc with her breast; and Segundo, with that palpitating picture to spur him, was for taking her in his arms, priest or no priest.

But he checked himself, laughed low and, whispering, "Next time, *señorita*," was off on his mission.

She walked back into the room rubbing angrily at her lips. "You wished to see me, father?" she asked, trying to be calm.

Her emotion, however, was too obvious to be ignored. "It was a trivial matter, child. I was on my way home from seeing a youth who is sick in the guard-house, and stopped to see if I could get one of your *muchachos* to help at the mass."

"Assuredly, father," she said.

"But, child," laying his hand on her head, "if there is anything I can help you in?"

She turned away and stepped toward her room, while the father, knowing her, sat down expectantly. She whirled, and, all in one motion, sat at his knee, buried her face in her hands and burst into tears. And the mother that is in your true priest came out to soothe this motherless girl.

"There, child," he whispered when the storm had passed. "Tell me all about it."

"I do not—can not—oh, it is impossible!" she declared.

Father Jacques smiled. "Can not what, child?"

"Love him—Segundo?"

Father Jacques could only pat her head at this, whereupon she drew a great breath, wiped her eyes and jumped up, rubbing at her cheek.

"What a little fool you must think I am!" she exclaimed.

"No—just a child!"

Noting him rubbing his lip, she stamped her foot.

"I am *not* a child," she said.

Within her a youthful spirit that tends toward laughter and inexplicable girlish whims struggled with the effect of encountering grave things before her time, and the priest smiled as the girl of twenty came uppermost under his teasing eyes.

"I am not a child," she repeated. "At least I know one man who does not think so."

"Who?"

"That officer—that Captain who those men call—how do you say it in English? The Grenadier?" She threw back her head and laughed at the memory. "I froze him—just like that."

And she illustrated her stand of the afternoon.

"No doubt he was much impressed," said the holy man with a faint smile.

"You should have seen," she laughed.

"He was very angry. To-morrow I am to take the oath of allegiance—or whenever he says. But we shall see." She grew pensive and serious once more, continuing, "No, I am not a child. I shall have a woman's part to play, no doubt."

"Yes," said the father seriously, "a good, broad woman's part, which you are capable of doing."

"If I can, then all thanks be to you," she said, thinking of how, when left parentless here and alone with her estates, the father had lent her an ever kind and guiding hand, not only in the handling of her affairs but in the training of her mind as well. But for him she might have grown up illiterate and narrow, but he, perceiving the rich seed within her, had nursed it and watched it grow as one does a wondrous flower. And at the right time he had provided the "Open Sesame" to that essential world of broadening books, so that now she gloried in a library whose scope would have delighted any man of letters.

"Yes, you are a woman," said the holy man again. "But do not thank me. It has been a work of the heart to guide you. Would that we had more like you in dealing with the *americanos*."

"The *americanos*," she cried. "Ugh! I hate them! That Captain, he is a brute!"

"I would not say as much as that. He is a soldier, true, and a forceful one; but a brute——"

"Did I not see his face, father? He has straight eyebrows and cold gray eyes that are set way under those ledge-like projections, and a straight mouth, and cruel jaw, while his hands look as if they could take and crush you—just like *that*—if he wanted to. Even if his uniform does become him. I would not——"

"My! my!" Father Jacques laughed, starting toward the door; "that is indeed more than I saw, child. Did he stay as long as that?"

"Only a minute, but——" Here she stopped, blushed red and stamped her foot. "I don't think I'll send you any *muchacho*," she called after him, laughing; and the father, ages wise in the ways of his children, shook his head many times as he walked home.

CHAPTER V

A HOMBRE'S SPEAR

SUN TUNG, wizened and old, walked into the Grenadier's office the next day and folded his long-nailed hands across his withered paunch in an attitude of meekness. From his outward appearance one would have thought him fresh from a holy rite before Confucius, whereas his thoughts were enlivened with much Celestial glee.

Any way he looked at it, the future looked full of pesos for Sun Tung.

The night before, in conference with Segundo in the grove across the river, they had arranged the whole program. Tung had at first been inclined toward having Segundo tell the Grenadier upon his return that he had delivered a message to the Moros and that they had refused to deal with the Americans. Thus, being hard up for labor, the officer would be forced to hire the Tagalogs that would shortly fill the town. Since these latter were to be levied on for the support of Segundo, and be forced to buy most of the supplies from Sun Tung, who owned most of the land thereabout, nearly all the money would find its way into Sun Tung's coffers.

It was a good joke, he added, that these yokels did not know that their hero Segundo was in secret business partnership with Sun Tung, and that the people would be, in a sense, paying Segundo for eating his own

food. Ah, they were fools, the Filipinos; as big fools as the *americanos* who had taken the town and left Sun Tung's stock intact.

But, though Segundo had enjoyed the point of the joke, he had immediately pointed out the shortcomings in Sun Tung's plan. It was quite probable that the Moros would come down to trade as soon as they heard the town was reoccupied by the Tagalogs. The Grenadier, whom Segundo had already learned was no fool, would demand an explanation. By pretending that he had not met with success Segundo might only delay putting the money into circulation, for it was quite in keeping with the Grenadier's character to go without the barracks temporarily rather than put money into the hands of those who would help out Segundo.

It was far better to do as the American had ordered. They would at least get the benefit of what money the Moros themselves put into circulation in trade with the Tagalogs. Let Sun Tung go back to town and wait but a few days and, with the plan Segundo had in mind, he would perhaps be able to have the *americanos* annihilated without losing a man of his own, and take the town as well, duping both Moros and Americans.

Leave it to Segundo, for all had gone well so far!

Knowing that Segundo was well on his way, Sun Tung was able to stand with pious mien before the new Commanding Officer and inquire in hobgoblin Spanish what was wanted of him.

The Grenadier essayed to tell him, whereupon the Spanish language suffered the agonies of the damned until, seeing Jimmy Knox in the doorway with his hand over his mouth, the Captain gave it up in disgust.



"I CAN'T make any headway this way," snorted the Grenadier. After the noisy departure of the Volunteers on the *Doña Teresa* he had taken occasion to examine the few *hombres* who had come in from Cagayan and, though these professed a desire to take the oath and go to work, their evident dulness and mediocre vocabularies disqualified them as interpreters. So, calling Todd, his striker, he sent that long-nosed, solemn-faced individual on a hunt for Father Jacques.

"My word," exclaimed Jimmy, "he's got a face cracked like a mud-puddle dried up in the sun!"

"Who, Todd or Sun Tung?"

"I meant Sun Tung," grinned Jimmy. "Though Todd hasn't the wrinkles, they're a pair to draw to. Both could play poker, I judge."

"You'd think so if you'd seen Todd's face when he denied being in my whisky this morning. Next time I catch him—ah, have you found him, Todd?"

"Sir, his *muchacho* says he's gone somewhere—some one sick; that's all I could make out."

"H'm! Now what——"

"Why don't you send for that Carmencita doll?" suggested Jimmy.

The Grenadier rubbed his chin. He would have to have somebody. At least it would do no harm to send after her. He gave Todd the order and, as he waited, glanced over some papers. He was conscious of a bit of resentment over the term "doll" as applied to this girl, who, in spite of the treatment she had given him, he knew to be entirely out of place and infinitely above her surroundings.

He glanced up sharply as Todd returned without her.

"Well?" he demanded.

"Sir, she won't come."

"What did she say?"

"Do you mean *all* of it, sir?"

"Certainly!"

Though his face was immobile, one of Todd's eyelids quivered suspiciously, and his soul gave a joyous gulp within that elongated cask.

"She said, sir," striking a Shakespearean attitude, "just like this, to give the Commanding Officer her compliments and, among other things, she'd be tee-totally——"

"Well, what the——"

"——irrevocably and perpetually boiled in oil before——"

Jimmy Knox gulped for fresh air, and went outside. The Grenadier also gulped. But he stayed inside.

"Todd," he snapped, "that'll do! Have you been drinking again?"

"Me, Captain?"

His Captain looked hard at this man who had been "made" and "busted" a half dozen times in the troop, and who kept him continually "on the fence" deciding whether to "bobtail" him or promote him.

"Stand up here," he beckoned. The odor he caught savored more of St. Louis than

Trinity Church, and Todd was banished to the quarters under arrest.

"He made it quite evident, however, that Miss Carmencita preferred to stay home," commented the Captain with a sidelong glance at the returning lieutenant's face.

"Quite evident," said Jimmy, with a gurgle. "Here's Father Jacques, though, just coming back. He'll help you."

Addressed, the priest readily acquiesced.

"What is it you wish to tell him?" he inquired.

"Ask Sun Tung why, when the guerrillas under Tal Placido were here during that time between the evacuation of the Spanish and the advent of the Volunteers, his store and stock remained exempt from molestation while the rest of the town was looted?"

The Chinaman's shrug was eloquent. Assuredly he could not read the mind of the Filipino Captain.



"WELL, tell Sun Tung I can read part of *his* mind," the officer replied.

"Tell him he's under suspicion of succoring Segundo, and that I'm going to keep an eye on him. However, I want it made clear to him that he is going to get fair treatment—that though I might destroy all supplies here on the ground that it would help to quell the insurrection, I am going to give him his chance to remain in business. At present, if we can agree on a price, I will give him a contract to supply this post with ice. Later he can have the wood contract, if he remains neutral. If he remains neutral, I'll protect him. If he don't, I'll put him out of business."

Sun Tung replied that he would remain neutral and walk in the straight and narrow path until doomsday, and, as far as he was concerned, take the oath on a stack of American Bibles as high as himself.

He was insistent on this, so, administering the oath, the Grenadier agreed with him on the price for the ice, whereupon Sun Tung tried to clinch a contract to supply the meats and groceries. This, the Grenadier explained, would be taken care of by their own Commissary Department. Furthermore, Sun Tung must live up to his oath and show his fealty before any more business would be thrown his way.

Sun Tung's shuffling feet having passed out toward his store, the Grenadier took Father Jacques by the arm and headed toward his dwelling.

"I want to go down that way to see that they're boiling that water thoroughly at the quarters," he said. "Can't be too careful about cholera here. But, incidentally, I want to ask you about the—er—young lady who lives near you."

"In what way, my son?"

The recent occurrence was explained to him.

"What do you intend doing, my son?"

"She rather nettled me at our first encounter, and I believe I told her she'd have to come down and take the oath of allegiance or get out of town—something to that effect."

The youth looked up with a sudden whimsical smile, and surprised a kindred light in the eyes of the priest.

"You're in a sort of trap, my son?"

"I'll admit it. From her answer this afternoon and what I saw yesterday I take it she wouldn't swear allegiance. When I thought of her as an interpreter, that suggested itself as a sort of—er—compromise. I'd rather jail her than run her out into the bosque, and I'd rather—well, I couldn't look at myself in the glass if I confined her in that hole. I think I said more than I meant!"

"And you don't want to break your word."

"No. She—well, I need another interpreter. Segovia will be here and there. They'll need a good one at headquarters when Segovia is out on a hike with us, too. I wouldn't require her to take the oath then, because I could keep my eye on her anyway."

"I don't know that she'll accept," said the father, thinking of Carmencita's professed hate for the Americans, "though the money, I fear, would be highly acceptable to her."

"She's in straits, then?"

"Yes, my son. Her plantation was practically ruined by the other troops."

"Good!" exclaimed the youth. But, recollecting himself, he hastily continued, "I meant that it was—that it would help to bring her—to see it in the right—I mean—"

The Grenadier, all youth for the instant, stopped short and blushed furiously. He was all tangled up with some curious emotions he could not properly define or analyze, and, having a horror of sentiment, he cursed himself mentally for a fool.

But the priest laid his old hand on the youth's arm.

"You mean you are sorry about her circumstances but are glad they may indirectly relieve you of an unpleasant duty?"

"Something like that—yes."

Biting his lip, the youth suddenly smiled ruefully at this quiet old man, who had, though he could not have told just why or how, got beneath his armor. And somehow he liked it. There was Jimmy, and a few others; but he had few friends, and it was good to "let down" once in a while.

"You'll tell her for me?" he asked. "She might be too resentful to deal with me, you know."

"She's very proud, but I'll see her," promised Father Jacques.

When he returned from the quarters, the Grenadier was informed that Carmencita had ridden out of the *barrio* toward her ranch but would return that evening, and he gave the rest of the afternoon to work that temporarily drove her from his mind. An attack being imminent at any time, it was imperative that he familiarize himself and his men with all the trails in the immediate surroundings as soon as possible, and to this effect he detailed several squads to ride out beyond the town, accompanying one of them himself. Nightfall overtook him some distance from the post, and it was near eight when, dismounting near the troop picket-line, he handed his reins to his orderly.

"Tell the cook to send over anything he has left," he directed, starting north toward his quarters.



OLD-FASHIONED oil-lamps stuck on lamp-posts had served to light the *barrio* for ages, but few had been found serviceable, and on this night there was but one lighted on the river *calle*, down which he rode. This stood before headquarters, a dull white eye ahead of him in the black tropic gloom. As he was a block away from it, the part of the street he walked in remained as dark as the overshadowing mountains, and the Grenadier, engrossed in plans, failed to see the *hombre* who slipped from a fence behind him.

The ride that afternoon had been unusually warm. He had worn a khaki blouse over his undershirt instead of a blue woolen overshirt, and the khaki, close-fitting and almost air-tight, was soaked with perspiration. Having dried in salty patches, the contact with the skin was decidedly annoying, and he fumbled at his belt-buckle

wearily, loosening his belt. He ripped open the buttons of the blouse, took the belt and holster in his right hand and, raising his arms, shoved them straight out on either side of his body. That pulled the blouse away from the skin, and he sighed with relief as the cool air played about his sticky ribs.

But the sigh ended in a startled oath. Something heavy and vicious hurled through the air behind him and ripped into the flapping khaki under his upraised arm.

The impact turned him half-round. He stumbled, felt a prod of steel in his right side and, plucking at it, cut his finger on a twelve-inch spear that had pierced the cloth. The long shaft dragged on the ground.

He was out of the blouse and racing back south in an instant.

With the impact had come the sound of pattering feet and a cry of appeal, of protest with a note of horror at the end, unmistakably feminine, strangely familiar. Before he could extricate the pistol from the holster, he made out a blot ahead of him, which now broke up into two figures, one leaping across the street to a fence, the other fleeing down it.

As the former made the fence and was for a fractional instant silhouetted against the sky, the officer fired.

He did not stop to see the result of his shot. He spurted frantically and caught the second figure just as it sought to turn into Carmencita's gate.

"You!" exclaimed the Grenadier, crushing her close for a moment against his breast.

Carmencita did not answer. Her heart was beating too wildly. He felt it plainly as he held her with his left arm, while the pistol's acrid smoke curled up from the right hand at his side.

Panting, tremulous, she was like some wild animal straining against him. She tried to speak; then, as they heard the guard pounding down the *calle*, the Grenadier pulled her inside the gate.

"Come," he commanded, seizing her wrist in a cruel grip, "come into the house."

She hung back. With a snort of impatience, he picked her up bodily and strode into the *hacienda*. There he placed her on her feet, and stood back, surveying her grimly.

She had been at her toilet after her ride, and her hair lay in tumbled masses on her

shoulders. The blush of modesty struggled with the pallor of fear for the moment, but as she met his eyes fully in the light a trace of her former hauteur returned.

"Well?" she said at last.

"Well? I should say well! What have you to say for yourself?"

The girl was regaining her breath.

"I have not much to say," she said slowly.

"Who threw that spear at me?"

She did not answer.

"Tell me!" he demanded, stepping near her.

He was, perhaps, more threatening in appearance than he wished to be, for the girl shrank back affrightedly. Her cheeks flamed an angry red, while her eyes blazed scornfully.

"You coward!" she cried. "Do you threaten women at all hours of the day?"



IT HALTED the officer. It was the first time he had been called a coward in his life. The accusation, coming from her, made him acutely uncomfortable. Instantly he was angry at himself for feeling uncomfortable, or for having any feelings at all about the matter except the indignation he felt was but his right. But he was ashamed and, being ashamed, he grew rougher still.

"I find it necessary," he stated, "when I have to deal with women who so far forget their sex as to attempt stabbing me in the back!"

It was her turn to be ashamed.

"You can not think I did that?" she trembled, relaxing and taking an involuntary step toward him. "That I would even want to!"

"Then you didn't?"

"Of course not. I tried to stop him."

"Who threw it?" he cried quickly.

"I can not tell you."

"You don't mean that you don't know the fellow?"

She did not reply.

"Then you do know him!" decided the Grenadier.

He took a turn about the room, thinking rapidly. Outside he heard the footsteps and the shouts of the guard beating around the street and the adjacent yards, and he knew he must hurry.

The cry of protest, the girl's clear eyes—of course she had not thrown the spear! Nor, he felt, even given her approbation to

the act. However, in that relaxation she had become altogether womanly, at sight of which the Grenadier regained himself, and suddenly he saw a way out of the whole dilemma.

"You know who he is but you won't tell?" he said.

"I do not want to fight that way, but I would not tell who he was—no."

Her answer pleased him so that he smiled—a flash of teeth, a crinkling of the lines about the eyes, a transformation of that stern face as pleasant as the sun-rays breaking through the clouds.

"Then I'll have to place you under arrest," said he.

"*Incomunicado*?" she exclaimed, surprised into Spanish.

"Yes. There is, however, one way you can avert it. I have to hire another interpreter, and Father Jacques was going to speak to you to-day—"

"I do not need a peso of your American money!" she flashed.

"Exactly. But I need an interpreter."

"I will never take that oath you require!"

"You need take none. I don't fancy you're going to hurt us much. All I want is your services, as I said. Quick, now," placing his hand on her arm and nodding at the door, beyond which the guard could be heard coming into the yard: "will you take it, or shall I call the guard?"

Carmencita bent her head. She, too, did some rapid thinking just then. She did want the stipend the position afforded, as well as any possible chance that might afford itself to help the Cause. She almost smiled as she thought how matters had adjusted themselves so unexpectedly and relieved her of the sting of pride she would have undergone had she been forced to ask for any position. He was really forcing her to accept something she was very glad to have. But she did not let him see it.

"I will take it," she suddenly answered. "I see no other way out of it."

"Good! Report in the morning." Already the Grenadier's men were knocking at the door and, seeing that the shutters at the window were closed, and that they could not have discovered his presence as yet, he whispered to her, "Go up-stairs—quick."

When she had obeyed he stepped to the door and threw it open.

"That you, sergeant?" he asked, stepping out. "No use looking further here. I shot

at one and followed the other in here, thinking that he came this way. But I must have been mistaken."

The sergeant held his torch up. "You're cut, sir!"

"Not bad. Did you find my blouse?"

"Yes, sir. And a dead *hombre* just on the other side of that fence—a Tagalog. Do you want to see him, sir?"

For answer their commander walked over to the spot and looked at the dead man. He had been shot through the back. The Grenadier recognized him as one of the *muchachos* he had seen about Carmencita's home, one who had, no doubt, thought to become a hero in the eyes of his countrymen by assassinating the *americano comandante*.

To let the girl know that the Tagalog had been killed would have weakened his hold on her, he thought, and thus force him to make her take the oath whether or no. But with him supposedly alive and she still refusing to reveal his identity, he "had" her! The *hombre*, whom she had tried to dissuade and later shielded as a matter of principle, was dead and punished. However, with the *hombre* still supposedly at large, and liable to punishment for his intended crime, she in refusing to reveal his name was liable as an accomplice. So he turned to the sergeant.

"There's some strange things going on in this town, men," he said, "and I've got reasons for not wanting this to be talked about until I give consent. I don't want it known that this man was killed. Let it be understood that he has escaped." He thought a moment, then ordered, "Pick him up and carry him down to the river-bank." This was done. With a slight smile, the Grenadier told a sentry to bring Todd, who was still under arrest in quarters.

"And a shovel with him," he added, at which the guard chuckled low. But Todd did not grin when, arriving, he was told that, in lieu of a trial, he could dig the *hombre's* grave, "four feet deep and six feet long." Seeing him well started, the officer took his rent blouse, shouldered the spear and went to his quarters, where he gave Jimmy Knox a somewhat sketchy account of the affair over his belated bacon and coffee.

"Todd digging the grave, eh?" chuckled Jimmy, after the doctor had attended the cut and departed. "That *hombre* will get a number of appropriate benedictions before

he is covered. And the little Carmencita rose will take her place among the thrones of—"

"I wish Segovia was back," said the Grenadier, frowning into his coffee.

"Oh, yes, Segovia. To be sure, Segovia. Yes, I wish Segovia *would* come back," said Jimmy, who had suddenly "smelled a rat."

He now found much secret amusement in the end of his cigarette. Segovia could never have made the Grenadier blush.

"The Old Man's stung with the love-bug," Jimmy mused.

The Grenadier was, indeed, surprised to find himself remembering how oddly delightful a girl's waist may feel in the crotch of one's arm, and how, when he came to think of it, how very much nicer Carmencita appeared pleading and ashamed than she did with eyes as cold as ice.

And Carmencita?

Telepathy may have taken a hand here, for the girl, in the privacy of her chamber, found herself wondering just where his arm had been—she had been so excited at first!

"I hate him!" she cried suddenly at the mirror. But it was a very rosy girl who blew out the light in sudden delicious shame and scrambled under the canopy of the old square-posted Spanish bed.

CHAPTER VI

THE MORO CHIEF

THAT night Carmencita had many dreams, in which Segundo and a big man who grew delightfully youthful when he smiled took prominent part. Segundo reproved her once because, having seen her *hombre* start out with one of her Moro curios a spear, and having followed him in fear and curiosity, she had interfered and not allowed him to finish his work.

During the talk, while she was trying to explain her action to Segundo, and having a hard time of it, the Grenadier appeared, shook Segundo like a little boy, then patted her on the shoulder, telling her that it would be all right. This "big brotherly" attitude angered her exceedingly. She told him so very plainly, and Segundo, taking advantage of the diversion, drew a dagger and attempted to stab the Grenadier in the back.

Immediately she screamed, and leaped to stop him. She awoke with the echoes of the scream in her ears, and her old servant

standing over her, wondering what it was about. It had been a very strange and confusing dream, albeit very realistic in that Segundo's contorted face remained long in her memory. She fell asleep again, wondering why she should want to save the life of a man she hated, and just where Segundo was at the present time.

He was, in fact, far up in the Moro country near Lake Lanao, deep in conference with Dato Batui. While the girl he longed for dreamed of him and the Grenadier, Segundo's versatile tongue was waxing eloquent in outlining a plan whereby he and Batui, a Mohammedan to the core, would effect the Grenadier's effectual and complete ruin. Batui, who was a replica of Geronimo in all save religion, listened carefully to the words of this young man whose wisdom he had come to admire in the days of the Spanish.

"You say, Señor Segundo, that the *americano* dog has two hundred men and rifles?"

"Yes, Dato. Possibly only one troop will leave the post at a time. But what are one hundred men to your tribe? You who whipped the Spanish repeatedly? *Madre de Dios*, but the Spanish thought Batui a fighter! And when it is over, there will be one hundred rifles to add to the Moro spoils."

"Good rifles, too," nodded the flattered Dato. "And you say Dato Barong agreed to build the *americano* sheds?"

Segundo nodded. After finding his own Tagalog guerrillas, and sending several of them on the rounds to spread the word to the scattered Tagalog families, he had made direct for the *casa* of the Moro Dato Barong, a chieftain whose desire for trade and pesos far exceeded his Mohammedan antipathy to the Christians.

The Americans had done him no harm, said Barong. If they had much rice and fish and many pesos, it would please him to bring his slaves into Iligan and build their nipa sheds. He would start for Iligan on the morrow, with his men ready for work. Since the Tagalogs would soon be back in town he would take many pony-loads along for trade. Thus he would make much money and kill two birds with one stone.

Yes, Allah was good, declared Barong. Then Segundo had gone back to Batui without, however, having said anything to Barong about the ambushade he had planned with Batui.

"So I thought," grunted Dato Batui. "Dato Barong sees the peso before the Koran at all times. But I, Dato Batui, will never have slave of mine work for a Christian dog. To trade a little—that is good. But to build the roof that shelters their infidel heads—bah! When this is over and I have the American rifles I will wipe out the casa of Dato Barong as the monsoon dries up the water!"

Segundo nodded in hearty approval, though it was immaterial to him what became of the Moros after his purpose was gained. On a certain day, he explained, one of his men would report to Dato Batui, and he could station his tribe, some eight hundred strong, in the highland plain near extinct Maol, a Spanish post Batui had himself wiped out. On the same day another Filipino from Segundo's band would come into the post of Iligan, professing to be a deserter, and volunteer to lead the Grenadier to the rendezvous of Segundo. The Grenadier would, of course, on Segovia's recommendation as to the man's apparent veracity, start out with his troop up the old Spanish trail running into the mountains to the south of Iligan and be steered into the overwhelming numbers near Maol.

Segundo explained he did not have enough rifles or men to meet the Americans as he would like. He did not care about capturing the American's guns, however, expecting Batui to take them all.

He hoped that, having thus thrown fortune in Batui's way, there would be long peace and much profitable trading between Segundo and Batui when he had whipped the Americans and regained Iligan.

This would be effected by what Segundo considered a very clever strategy. While the Grenadier was engaged with the Moros near Maol, Tal Placido with his band would attack Iligan, and the town be retaken. The more men Segundo could get the Grenadier to take along, the better—it would mean that many less to protect the town. And, having regained Iligan, he would be in position to protect himself effectually against any attack which the warlike Batui might contemplate against the Christian world in general, once the Americans were whipped.

This part of the plan Segundo did not disclose to Batui. By which it may be seen that he did not trust Batui overly

much. Nor Batui him, beyond a certain point. It was planned between them to join forces after the big fight and attack Iligan, and so it was agreed, though both knew in their hearts that this part of the scheme would never be carried out. Segundo departed with many smiles, making for the rendezvous of his lieutenant, Tal Placido, there to perfect the rest of the plot.



BUT, though both he and Batui smiled at their secret thoughts, there was one in Batui's tribe who did not smile. When Segundo left, this man slipped out of the casa and nearly killed a pony in his ride for Dato Barong's village, across the Argus river.

Two years back, this Moro, Sal Junto by name, had been outbid by the wealthier Dato Batui in a contest for a girl. She had gone into Batui's harem and Sal Junto had never forgiven. True, he had remained in Dato Batui's retinue, but with a smooth face and a black heart. Now was the chance to do him harm as well as get many pony-loads of rice for his information.

"So?" said Dato Barong, when he had heard the news. "Dato Batui says I think more of the peso than I do of the Koran? Well, Mohammed himself thought well of worldly goods; and that fool thinks only of war."

As it struck in upon him, Dato Barong saw hundreds of pesos vanishing into thin air, and he danced with rage.

"The fool, the fool!" he stormed. "Suppose he attacks the American tribe in the open? Will the Christian pour pesos into a Mohammedan coffer when the Mohammedan spits in his face for no other reason than his being a Christian?"

"There are the rifles," pointed out Sal Junto.

"One can not eat rifles!" retorted Barong. "And when it comes to that pass, it were better to get pesos first and rifles afterward! I should have taken off the traitor's head when he was here. He plays false with the *americanos*—he will with us. I will go down now instead of waiting until the sunrise."



SO IT was that while Carmencita slept and dreamed of Segundo's wrath, Segundo in the flesh reached his men, made his plans with Tal Placido and snatched a few hours' sleep before his

return to Iligan, while across the highland plains trotted a long caravan of wicker-saddled ponies hurrying toward the old Spanish trail and Iligan, their owner cursing the slave-drivers that they might reach their goal ahead of Segundo.

But Carmencita, knowing nothing of this, slept better toward morning, and arose with the light of laughter in her eyes.

She had occasion to feel jubilant, she thought. She could be a great help now, in case Segundo should be detected. This was better than Segundo himself could have hoped for—that she be allowed to work near headquarters and stand an excellent chance of learning many American secrets. The Grenadier did not think she could do much harm. She made a mouth at her glass and, even when she heard her tire-woman humming, "*Yo soy purita visayana; Nada tengo de española,*" she did not reprove her.

"Your pure Visayan blood will in time be gladdened," she laughed. "And by the Spanish—by *this Spaniard*." She ate her breakfast and went off humming a senseless little ditty,

*"Cinco dragones y un cabo,
Oh, no, no, no, no!
Y un gato do sacristán!"*

"At home," said Father Jacques, meeting her on the street, "it is near the time of the Christ's birth and there is probably snow. But here the flowers bloom, even in the children's cheeks. And are you glad this morning! What is the cause, my daughter?"

The flowers bloomed afresh and danced among her dimples. "It is the *americanos* who make me glad," she laughed.

She explained the occurrence of the evening previous.

"I had not heard," said the father. "There are so many shots on outpost I paid little attention. This saves me the pleasure of speaking about the position of interpreter, as he asked me to, last night."

Then he frowned a little, and warned her, "The cause is good. But be careful. I would not have you come to harm even for the cause. The new Commander is a resourceful and competent man."

"He is an overgrown boy!" declared Carmencita.

"A boy?"

"*St, padre*. You see—I have seen him smile!" She laughed whimsically.

Father Jacques's eyebrows raised and then he laughed with her. But she had hurried away before he could answer.

"I thought I knew her," he muttered, looking after her with warm eyes. "But how can you fathom one who is deep, yet whimsical on the surface, and essentially feminine at the same time?"

Carmencita's duties that day kept her busy with many conversations between the officers and Tagalogs. These had already begun to come in. That morning the troops had awakened to see little fires on the braziers beneath nipa shacks that had long been vacant, and many were the chocolate-colored, squat Filipinos that lined up that day at headquarters to turn in the few arms they carried and have explained to them the meaning of the oath of allegiance.

Since the Grenadier wished to expedite his survey of the country, and furthermore was averse to forcing soldiers to do quartermaster work, he allowed Lieutenant Grimes to hire a few of the Tagalogs to handle the remaining loads on the beach until the Moros came in. So it happened that at four that afternoon no American was at headquarters save the sentry who paced before the door.

Not expecting Segovia or the Moros so soon, the Grenadier was off with Jimmy Knox and a squad across the river. Grimes was at the beach with a few Tagalogs and carabao carts, handling the boxes too large for the pack-mules. The officer of the day was at the guard-house, examining a Tagalog caught by the outpost the night before, and the other officers were off with details beyond the coconut-grove to the east. Carmencita was trying hard to master the keyboard of a typewriter when she looked up and saw Segundo in the doorway.

"So?" he smiled, glancing back to see if the sentry was listening. "You have stolen a march on me—and the Americans?"

She was not quite sure of herself. Being a novice at the game, her heart threatened to beat beyond control. Her quick frown toward the sentry was eloquent. "Be careful," it said; "who knows that he can not understand?"

Segundo lowered his voice. "Though I don't think he can understand," he said. "Carmencita," he whispered in Spanish, "till you touch them again, my lips will always be cold!"

"Your lips will *stay* cold, then," she whispered back fiercely. "If that is all you care to talk of, you'd best report to the *americano!*"

Segundo looked as though he would take her in his arms, but the presence of the sentry forbade. He sighed, asked her where the Grenadier was, and she explained.

"Sun Tung told me something of last night," he said. "Did they get your *muchacho?*"

"Not yet," she said.

"When I heard that you had taken this place, señorita, I thought perhaps you had gone over to the *americanos*; since you did not wait for directions from me."

Her eyes blazed. "You know better," she began.

"I was but teasing you," Segundo said, smiling. "I know you are with the cause."

The girl was burning with curiosity as to the outcome of his mission.

"Tell me," she implored. "The families have already begun to come in. What have you planned to do?"

But Segundo had been thinking on his way down. It was not necessary that he explain the full extent of his plans, he had decided; that is, not to her.

The guerrilla loved this girl with a passion near to his undoing and, seeing clearly that she shrank from personal contact with him, he did not wish to strengthen her aversion by disclosing the trend of his mind. Though she might wish ardently for any amount of catastrophes to befall the Americans, he was not sure that her patriotism would condone some of the schemes he fostered. In that she was like Father Jacques. He could not disclose too much to her.

"I will be ready for the Americans as soon as we get more rifles," he temporized. "At present we will have to have supplies. We will arrange that this evening."

"But what——" she broke off and turned toward the door. "I think some of the officers are returning."



SEGUNDO stepped to a window. "No," he said, "it is Dato Barong and his men. He has made good time."

"The Moros the *comandante* wants to build the shacks?"

"Yes."

She joined him and, in company with the

guard, who now came out in front of the fort across the plaza, looked down the *calle* at a long procession of heavy-laden ponies, beside which strode a horde of brown men all but naked. Their long, greasy, knotted black hair gleamed in the sun. They were armed with long bolos, spears, barongs and creeses, while at their head strode Dato Barong, a page holding an umbrella over his turbaned head. They passed headquarters, and wound into the parade-ground, where the sergeant of the guard accosted him.

"*¿Habla Vd. español?*" he inquired.

"*St—un poco,*" grunted Barong, his old eyes darting here and there at this first view of the Americans.

The sergeant scratched his head.

"I don't know enough of this lingo to do much talking," he muttered. "Though I expect this is the gang come down to build the barracks. Them bolos don't look any too good to me, though. Graham," calling a sentry, "the officer of the day just left for outpost number three, and you'd better go get him. No one's at headquarters. On your way tell Lieutenant Grimes the Moros are here. And, Jones, you better go to the barracks and tell those fellows to get their guns and come up here. If Grimes takes it in his head to disarm these fellows there'd better be some men around here."

Then he readdressed Barong. "*¿Quién busca, Dato?*"

"*El americano comandante,*" said Barong.

The sergeant shook his head. "*Comandante* vamoose—*poco tiempo* come back. Thunder, you can't understand that. You *querer hablar* to the *comandante?*"

"*St, st.*" Barong's old eyes had turned toward headquarters and now he saw Segundo on the porch—or Segovia, as the sergeantk new him. "Is that the Commandant's house?" he got out in halting Spanish.

"*St, st.*" nodded the sergeant. "Hum, there's Segovia. When'd he get back? I'll just take him over there, and he can spout to the interpreter till one of the officers show up."

Barong gave some directions to his body-guard in Moro, then, following the sergeant, went to the headquarters steps. There the sergeant "passed him up" to Segovia, who took him into the office and offered him a chair.

The pacing sergeant watched him ceaselessly.

CHAPTER VII

THE SENTRY SHOOTS

THE happenings of the next few moments were hurried and swift, and the controversy over with before even Grimes, who was down on the beach, arrived at the office. Yet to the girl the little tableau appeared as theatrical and long-drawn-out, each movement recorded on the retina as clearly, as though she were looking at a moving-picture with a slow operator at the crank.

Everything seemed as usual: the broad back of the sentry pacing near the door, the Moros squatting in the parade as she had seen them a hundred times during the Spanish régime, the soft lap-lap of the waves against the stone fort at the beach. Yet a glance at Barong filled her with a slight apprehension, a vague uneasiness, for his old eyes were vicious and wolf-like, and his manner eloquent of rage and a certain exultation.

He did not take the chair Segundo offered him, but stood there with one hand hooked in the broad gold-colored belt that stretched over his left shoulder and under his right armpit. His right hand rested on his bolo-hilt. The bolo, near four feet in length, was encased within two strips of bamboo wrapped with coconut-fiber, and he placed its point on the floor. Then he leaned on it slightly, as a man would on a staff, while his black-toothed mouth opened in a mirthless, ape-like grin and his heavy-lidded eyes gleamed piggishly.

"I have much to say to the interpreter," he said in Moro.

"Well?" snapped Segundo.

"Why is it that Segundo——"

Both Segundo and the girl looked quickly at the sentry. He could not understand the Moro tongue, but if he caught that name——

Segundo's sunken cheeks went white with anger.

"Do not mention that name here!" he said slowly.

"By the shades of Allah——"

"Is that your gratitude for putting you in the way of pesos?" the interpreter cut in.

Carmencita looked fearfully from one to the other. That Segundo had been told to hire Moros, she knew; but something else was between them—just what, she burned and feared to know.

"Come," Segundo said in pleasanter tones. "What does Dato Barong have to say?"

"Much. You speak of gratitude for pesos thrown my way; why does the man faithful to none put the Moros in the way of pesos and then tell another Moro tribe to make war on the *americanos*?"

"What does the Dato mean?" the girl whispered, before Segundo could speak.

"It means that he," pointing to Segundo, "has planned to lead the *americanos* into an ambushade with Dato Batui."

"Is that true?" she asked Segundo.

But he was looking at Dato Barong with eyes that glittered poisonously.

"Why does Barong chose to be squeamish at that?" he snapped.

"Why do you think? You have chosen to make worse enemies of the *americanos* than we who care to trade would have them. But you will not! Either you tell Dato Batui the pact is broken or I tell the *americano comandante* that Segundo is Segovia!"

The Dato's voice had raised a little. Though the sentry did not understand the Moro tongue he paused instinctively at the door, peering in.

Something was going wrong, he knew. The white-faced girl, her eyes darting from Segovia to Dato Barong; the Moro's defiant attitude; Segovia's sullen brow—all spoke of trouble.

Even as he looked Segovia's hand made a movement toward his pistol.

Dato Barong saw it also. He screamed a Moro oath and raised the bolo, but as he did so the sentry jumped into the room. Barong turned his head. He misunderstood the soldier's intentions and, since he was closest, struck at the sentry first. The bolo whistled close to the cavalryman's neck. But his big Krag roared suddenly and Barong crumpled to the floor, shot through the head. Segovia shoved his pistol back with a sigh.



MEANWHILE the Grenadier, returning with his squad, had forded the Lenamon just below the fort. Having seen the Moros come up into the parade, he had intended hastening on, when his eyes fell on Todd and McLane who, having been let off any details for the day, were busy painting a *banca* they had hauled up on the beach.

"Where'd you get that?" the officer demanded.

"Down here on the beach. Filled with sand, and we dug it up, sir."

"Where'd you get the paint?"

"Bought it, sir."

"Humph! I expect so! However," with a glance from them to the *banca*, "that's a boat built on good lines. Tell you what you can do. I'll detail you and McLane and one other man to patrol the coast and the river about here at night from now on. Excused from all other duties. Arrest any one you see going across with supplies in a *banca* and dump all the stuff in the river. And——"

Just then the shot sounded from headquarters. The Grenadier looked up quickly, saw the Moros rise to their feet in the parade, saw that the sentry was off his beat on the porch, noted the men running from the direction of the convent. He was off through the market-place on the gallop, his squad reining behind. He overtook Grimes, flung his reins to a mounted soldier and ran up the steps.

"What's the matter?" he inquired. But, seeing Barong on the floor in a puddle of dark blood, he needed no answer.

"Who got him?" came next.

"I did, sir," said the sentry.

The Grenadier did a deal of fast thinking. There were the Moros crowding near, all armed, all frankly curious and belligerent, exclaiming gutturally among themselves. A minute before their chief had gone into the *americano* building. There had been a shot, and now no chief appeared. Their thoughts were perfectly obvious. Their possible actions in the next few seconds were easy to guess at and unpleasant to contemplate.

At least half of the Grenadier's forces were still out on the exploring expeditions he had inaugurated. Those he had with him were at present unformed. There was no time to inquire as to the cause of the shooting. A moment's indecision, and these Moros might be among them with their bolos. It was his first sight of them, but their ugly, black-toothed faces made him give them full credit for all he had heard of them.

In crises, the Grenadier possessed a brain that worked at diagnosis and arrived at the remedy with the quick, strong throbs of an engine.

"Sergeant," he bellowed across the parade, "line up those sentries there at the fort. And you men," designating those who had come from quarters, "line up across the street there and load. Shoot the first Moro that makes a move with a bolo. You two," addressing two of the guard who had run to headquarters, "pick up that Dato's body and bring it out here. And you, Segovia, come here."

A growl stirred the Moros as the men appeared with the dead chief. Then an ominous quiet fell upon them.

"Take the Dato out and lay him before his tribe," ordered the Grenadier. "Go on—go right out—don't show a minute's hesitation now."

The men did as ordered, laying the Dato on the ground. Three of his harem fell on his body and set up a hideous wailing. Calling his sentries back, the Grenadier spoke to Segovia.

"He is the chief?" nodding at the dead man.

"Yes, Captain."

"Tell the next Moro in line to stand out."

Segovia addressed them, and the Dato's son, one Momungun, stepped forward.

 "TELL him," said the Grenadier, "that their chief has been killed through a mistake—understand? A mistake. Tell them that this sentry shot him because the Dato pulled his bolo to show it to Miss Carmencita—see? And the sentry thought he intended wrong, not understanding the Moros. However, tell them that the *americanos* will punish their murderers and that this man will die for his crime."

As the interpreter talked, the Grenadier wheeled to Lieutenant Grimes. "Bring your sacks of pesos from the safe—quick."

Then, Segovia having finished speaking, the Grenadier ordered the sentry who had shot Barong to remove his belt.

"But, sir——" pleaded that individual.

"—— it, take it off!" the Grenadier snorted.

The man handed him his belt and gun.

"You two men," turning to the other guards, "take this man as a prisoner straight through those Moros and to the guard-house. Walk straight now, and look them straight in the eye!"

The timbre of his voice thrilled them.

They took their prisoner and walked through the Moros with shoulders well back, looking at the horde with the level gaze of fearlessness. Pins could have dropped and been heard plainly. The pack opened silently, allowed them to pass through, then closed to face the Grenadier.

"Tell them now," he said to Segovia, "that here are the American pesos—" he dumped a sackful in full view upon the floor of the porch—"to be paid out to good Moros who wish to work. The Americans will deal fair, as has been shown."

This Segovia repeated, and it was patent that, at sight of the pesos and the quick action in punishing the sentry, the old Dato's son wavered. The blood of his father flowed strong in his veins. Pesos were an omnipotent argument. The slaves did not have much to say, though one or two of the freedmen joined their priest in a protest. These the new Dato frowned down.

He stepped closer and addressed Segovia at length.

"He says," translated Segovia, "that he will let the *americano comandante* know this evening. First he will take his tribe to the old camping-place in the east coconut-grove. There are some in his tribe who do not want to trust the *americanos*. Their Dato has been killed and they are more for war than for peace. But it is the young Dato you will have most to deal with now. Most of the men with him are slaves and their voice does not count."

"He will let me know this evening, eh? Tell him he gets no longer than that," said the Grenadier, thinking it well not to kneel too far. "And when he comes back—if he wishes to place his men at work—each and every Moro will leave his arms outside the *barrio*."

The young Dato nodded, cursed one of the freedmen to silence and ordered the body picked up. Slowly the cavalcade got into motion across the moat bridge. The soldiers, tense and silent, watched them depart.

And when the last one of them had crossed the bridge, the Grenadier sighed with relief. He took the dead cigar-stub from his mouth.

"You men can go back to quarters now," he told the line in the street.

Then Carmencita touched him on the arm.

CHAPTER VIII

BOLOS ARE OUT

WITH lips parted as though a torrent of words trembled in her breast, she had been watching the Grenadier closely throughout the talk. Death she had seen, and become somewhat inured to the sight of it, but that this sentry who had shot only in self-defense should die for his act—she felt that she must say something to stop it.

"Will you have that man shot?" she asked.

The Grenadier flushed. "Of course not," he answered. Did she think him a murderer?

Then, remembering, he could have bitten his tongue. She had been on the verge of telling him something concerning this affair. His admission closed her lips. There was much that he wanted to know, so, regaining his composure, he ordered them all into the office.

"Have the prisoner brought over here at once," he ordered further. "Now, Segovia, what was this all about?"

Carmencita could not but feel a thrill of admiration as Segundo, knowing that at any minute Dato Barong's son might choose to reveal the spy's identity, sat cool and collected under the Grenadier's frank eye and told his version of the affair without a moment's hesitation. If the Grenadier had asked her first—

She trembled at the thought, and hung on Segundo's every word, so that she might corroborate his statements.

Segundo-Segovia told him that Barong, incensed because the interpreter would not join in a plan whereby Barong was to be paid all the money due his freedmen as well as his slaves, had threatened to tell the *americano comandante* that Segovia had been an *insurrecto* before joining the Americans, and probably was one at heart still. When Segovia had replied that the Americans knew this, and that he, in company with many other Spaniards, had been forced into the Filipino service against their will, Barong had made a movement toward his bolo. This made it necessary for Segovia to reach his pistol.

The sentry, stopping at the sound of Barong's loud voice, had jumped into the room to interfere. Then Barong had

slashed out at the sentry. Of course the soldier had had no other choice than to shoot him. It was a sad occurrence, yes.

"Señorita," the Grenadier looked now at her, "give me your version of it?"

It was for the cause, and she lied valiantly. But at the end, with the Grenadier's eyes upon her pale face, she arose.

"I am not quite myself——" She broke off with a glance at the floor where the blood still showed ominously.

"No doubt," said the Grenadier, his voice softening. "It was no sight for a lady. You may go, if you wish."

She thanked him and left, whereupon the Grenadier again eyed Segovia. The latter returned his gaze for a full moment, neither speaking.

Then, "I am very sorry this occurred, Segovia. You know that I would avoid, if possible, any altercations with the Moros. However——" he paused anew, then called in the imprisoned sentry.

"Haskel, give me your version of this shooting," he ordered.

"Well, sir, they were talking——"

"Who?"

"Segovia here and Miss Carmencita——"

"Before the Moro came in?"

"Yes, sir."

"Wait a minute. Lieutenant Grimes, didn't you say you would need Segovia down there at the beach?"

Grimes had not said so, but he found that he did. There were some things he could not make the *hombres* understand; he needed an interpreter; yes!



"NOW," said the Grenadier when they had gone, "what were they talking about?"

"I don't understand much of the lingo, sir, but there was something said about lips and it seemed to me that Segovia was getting pretty keen about a kiss or something like that when——"

The Grenadier puffed short and sharp at his cigar.

"I mean did you overhear anything that has to do with this case?"

"No, sir—not that I could understand. I suppose it's natural for people to lower their voices, too, when they're making love——"

"Go on, go on."

"So I didn't pay so much attention, sir, until the Moros came in and this Dato

came up into the office. Being naturally curious at the first sight of them fellows, I was sizing this Dato guy up out of the tail of my eye when I first sensed from the tone of their voices that there was trouble on."

"Did you catch any of the words?"

"They talked in Moro, sir, and the only thing I could make out was the words Segundo and Segovia—only the old guy had so much betel-nut in his jaw he talked like a man with his mouth full of mush, and I'm not right sure of even those words."

"H'm. Who made the first move?"

"It happened so quick I couldn't swear, sir. The Moro with his bolo, the interpreter with his pistol. I jumped in—the Moro cut at me—I plugged him—and that's all I know about it, sir."

"You did right—just right. I wish, however, you could have understood them better. You may go back to quarters."

"Then you are——"

The Grenadier smiled grimly. "Of course not. You don't think I would—— Get out now, and go back to quarters. Keep out of sight of the Moros. Lieutenant, have the first sergeant put Haskel on details to keep him out of the post while the Moros are here, so there won't be any chance of their recognizing him. Shoot a soldier, an American soldier, for one of those curs? ——!"

He rolled the cigar back and forth in his mouth. "Orderly, you go down to the beach, get Segovia, tell him to go to that Moro Dato and tell him I want his answer before retreat. Before retreat, understand? He saw the pesos. I'm not going to knuckle one bit further. If he wants the job he can take it—if he doesn't, I'll give him until nine o'clock to get out of the post, or blow him clean off the earth!"

This message was duly received by Segundo, and he left Grimes on the beach to walk over to the Moro camp. He was glad of the chance to get the ear of Momungun, for the net was drawing close around him, and he had been tempted to give it up and slip back to his men in the hills.

But for Barong's action of the afternoon, things would have gone off smoothly. He wondered who had told Barong of the pact with Batui, and cursed himself for having dealt with Barong at all. He might have gone further inland and got some of Dato Parang's men for the work—Parang was neither squeamish nor too avaricious.

It depended now on what Momungun would do.

None of the tribe knew that he was Segundo save Barong, who was now dead, and his son, Momungun. As he did not fear exposure from any source save the latter, he must deal with him quickly and find out his intentions.

Momungun readily stepped out from among his ponies and joined him.

"What is it Segundo wants?"

"Segovia, you mean."

Momungun cackled. "My father knew of you, Segundo."

"Well, are you going to give me up, or not, Dato?"

"I am like Barong, Segundo. I have no love for the *americanos*. But I will not seek war with them, preferring peaceful trade as long as they stay out of my country. Either you agree to give up the plan of steering the *americanos* into an ambushcade for Batui, or I tell their *comandante* you are Segundo. I have enough Spanish to tell him."

Segundo looked hard at the ground before replying. He sighed.

"Very well," he said at last, "I will agree to that."

"Good," then said Momungun. "But that is not all. Segundo has no doubt raided many of the Christian churches he claims to fight for. One thousand pesos also, or I go to the *comandante*."

It was on the point of Segundo's tongue to refuse him, and flee to the hills. But that would have upset all of his plans for the time being. The Grenadier looked upon him with some displeasure now. Suspicion would soon follow. If possible he meant to preserve his incognito until he effected the ambushcades. After that it would not matter if his identity became public.

"Am I to be sure that none in the tribe will expose me?" he parried.

"None in the tribe save myself know that you are Segundo," replied Momungun. "All think you Segovia, *americano* interpreter."

"I see. You and your father alone aimed to coin the knowledge. Who told you?"

"Why?"

"If the man who told you is in the tribe, how can I be sure that he will not expose me?" cried Segundo.

"He is not of our tribe, but of Batui's, and is with Batui now."

"Good. Then I will pay you," said Segundo.

He then delivered the ultimatum of the American commander, telling Momungun that the American had decreed that the Moros must either give their consent to work peacefully or be run out of the post.

"Tell the *comandante* I do not desire war," replied Momungun. "He has punished the soldier who he says killed my father by mistake, and has spoken fair. But," with an added gleam of the eye, "he does not know what I suspect. Is it not more than likely Segundo had a hand in that killing? Segundo had good reasons to desire Barong's death!"

"I had no hand in it," cried the guerrilla, assuming indignation. "Am I a fool? Now what shall I tell the *comandante*?"

"Tell him my men will go to work in the morning for him. As for you—that thousand pesos before the sunset!"



SEGUNDO nodded, and hurried off toward Sun Tung's store. He would pay the money rather than—

But suddenly he stopped. That gleam of the eye when Momungun had suggested his complicity in Barong's shooting! Was it probable that the Moro would keep his faith after he received the money? Segundo thought long.

Finally he slapped his leg in an unwonted show of exultation. If Batui's man had told Barong, what was to hinder him coming into the post, at any time, to expose him? He could not stay now. He must eliminate Momungun, make a plausible exit and hurry the ambushcade as fast as possible. And he had hit upon the only way to make this possible.

He hurried to a consultation with a half-dozen natives on the outskirts of town. These, taking rifles from their hiding-places, sneaked through the undergrowth of the east coconut-grove to positions near the Moro camp, while Segundo, not wishing to be seen again in town, had a pony sent out to him ready for his escape.

Meanwhile the Grenadier and Jimmy sat at headquarters waiting for the interpreter to return. Instead of allowing the troops to "stand retreat" before the convent, he had ordered them to "fall in" on the parade, where they now stood leaning on their arms, conjecturing among themselves.

"You put it to the Moros rather strong, didn't you?" queried Jimmy.

"H'm—yes—but it was my only course. The shooting has happened now, much as I would have liked to avoid it. And I can't let those Moros get the idea into their head that we're afraid of them."

"I tell you," exclaimed Jimmy, "there's something back of this deal. That tale they told this afternoon was rather flimsy."

"You mean——"

"That Dato had something on Segovia, that's what! Tell you what—let's give Segovia the water-cure and see what he coughs up!"

"You think the interpreter isn't all he pretends to be?"

"Yes," Jimmy declared.

The Grenadier looked musingly out of the window. He puffed hard at his cigar. A change had taken place in the sky, for behind the western hills the sun was setting in a flamboyant blaze of glory. The black hills, transformed to a solid ebony, thrust their peaks up into a red effulgence that leaped and flamed like the outbreaking of some gigantic hidden furnace. Reflecting this, the waters of the bay swayed slothfully, like a sea of blood. Against this background stood the white stone fort, the yellow parade, the green palms and the silent, grim-faced, blue-shirted men, their outlines clear as cameos in the false light. Something medieval, something somber in the wild beauty of the scene fitted perfectly with the Grenadier's present mood, for he had been thinking of the sentry's words, "I suppose people would naturally talk low when they're making love."

He sat for a moment filled with this thought, forgetting Jimmy, but the next instant he was up on his feet, listening intently.

The quiet had been disrupted by a fusillade of shots from the east coconut-grove.

"Outpost number three?" guessed Jimmy.

"Too close! The Moros!" the Grenadier ejaculated.

He ran into the parade.

"Get ready at those machine-guns," he yelled to the sergeant in command of the machine-gun platoon.

The squad jumped for the gun-shed back of headquarters, whipped off the covers and dragged the guns into positions commanding both streets and the parade.

A group of curious Filipinos who had gathered to watch the evening formation grew tense at the first sound of firing, then broke for their houses.

But in an instant they came back, yelling excitedly. There was a moment's quiet at the coconut-grove. Then a chorus of wild yells advertised a great band of Moros coming nearer. Other shots echoed and re-echoed along the outskirts now, and the Grenadier, already in motion with his men, ran into several frantic Tagalog squaws screaming, "*¡Madre de Dios! ¡Ah! están los moros!*"

A glimpse of several scattered groups through the apertures between the houses convinced the officer that the Moros were not coming in a concentrated band. They were attacking the outstanding Filipino shacks first. From these the most valiant Tagalogs were alternately firing and screaming for the *americanos soldados*.

If possible he had to check the advance before the Moros were scattered throughout the town.



HE THREW his men out in a long line of skirmishers down the street, forming quickly a line which, though broken, stretched across the town for five blocks. Even before reaching their positions some were engaged. They commenced firing without command.

At once the whole line was rushing toward the grove, bunching into groups where necessary, swinging out again in the next street. They fired from behind every available protection, the roar of the big Krag's swelling into a thunderous tattoo.

With ten men the Grenadier rushed through a gap in the houses about the middle of the line and came upon a group of Moros armed with bolos and spears. Instantly the foremost soldiers fired, killing two. All but one of the rest immediately threw down their arms. This fellow, a freedman, snarled at his companions, severed the head of the nearest with his bolo and rushed at the Americans.

"Get him!" yelled the Grenadier.

The rifles slammed up against their shoulders and roared viciously. The Moro stopped and staggered as though struck by heavy rocks. His dazed eyes rolled up. He grabbed feebly at his slipping bolo. He pitched toward them, in one last agonized effort to reach the hated Christians.

One man in his excitement was aiming at the rest of the group.

"Don't shoot any more of these!" cried the officer, knocking up his rifle. The Moros were yelling "*Pogaree, americano, pogaree*" and he ordered one of the soldiers, "Take these fellows to the parade at once."

Then, as they were herded back, the squad pressed forward, shooting at every Moro who showed fight.

But it was patent that the tide had already turned. The quickly formed line had checked the advance, and driven the Moros back into the coconut-grove. Here and there some fought despairingly with their bolos, but there was not a rifle among them and they were standing a poor chance against the hard-shooting guns of the Americans. Group after group threw down their arms, and in a few minutes the great roar subsided to a few stray shots. The Grenadier ordered the trumpeter to blow "Cease Firing."

"Have every Moro that surrendered marched to the parade-ground," was the order sent down the line. "And," calling a non-commissioned officer, "take a squad of ten men and round up every man, woman and child in this *barrio*, and bring them all to the parade-ground as well. Furthermore, search every shack in the place for arms. I thought they were all turned in, but I see they weren't."

"Have we lost any men?" he asked the first sergeant of K troop as he came up.

"Four cut. I had them sent to the hospital, sir."

"Bad?"

"Courtney is cut pretty bad, sir."

"You go back and stand over that — contract doctor with a gun, Lieutenant Grimes, and tell him I know he's been hitting the dope and if he don't stay with that boy and pull him through I'll take pains to run him out of the Service. Repeat it literally—understand? Now," as Grimes left, "have any of you men seen Segovia?"

No one had, and a search was instituted. The Grenadier walked out to the Moro camp, where the frightened ponies were stampeding among the wailing squaws and scattered dead. Off to one side of the camp he found Dato Momungun riddled with slugs. He bent over to inspect the dead body. Taking out his pocket-knife he cut out a bullet, and straightened.

"We didn't get him!" said he now. "Mauser bullet. Lieutenant Knox, take the squad back to the parade and take charge there. Hold every Moro and Filipino there until I get back. You, Todd, get Miss Carmencita and tell her to report to me at the parade-grounds. I'm going to the hospital first."

CHAPTER IX

THE WATER-CURE

A GLOOMY, rainy day would have best matched Carmencita's mood after leaving headquarters. Though she had become inoculated with some of the fatalism of the tropics, the killing of Barong, coming like a thunderbolt, had seared her mind.

Furthermore, the revelation of Segundo's intentions threw her into a fever of curiosity and unrest. When and how was the ambushade to be effected? Fighting had to be done, of course, but not *that* kind! She knew that an ambushade is a justifiable move in the eyes of those engaged in war, but why should he have entered a compact with the unspeakable Moros?

One time she had ridden unexpectedly upon the remains of a Spanish patrol killed by the Moros, and her own eyes had verified the stories men would fain keep from good women.

She had never forgotten the unutterable agony stamped on those dead Spanish faces, nor the horrid details of the atrocities committed upon their bodies. To ambushade, to kill if possible; yes, that was perfectly fair war. But to place the matter in the hands of a tribe of unprincipled, blood-thirsty, human devils like the Moros nauseated her.

In perspective she could see the mutilated bodies, unnecessarily tortured—ugh!

She closed her eyes. She felt that she had to have an interview with Segundo at the earliest opportunity. When and where was it to be? Why did he not use his own men?

It was in this mood the priest found her. "I heard you had to look close on death this afternoon," was his compassionate greeting.

Nodding, she whispered, "Father, if you knew of something wrong—something altogether at variance with the recognized ethics of war—no, I don't mean that,

because an—because anything is fair in war. But if you knew something that was contemplated against your enemy, something unutterably inhumane — would you tell them?"

"You are vague, child."

"I mean if you knew them to be in great danger, would you tell them?"

"They are in danger at all times, child. What is it you know?"

She paused irresolutely, seeking for words. "If something heinous, something uncalled-for, something against all human instincts, were plotted against them, would you warn them?"

The father placed his hands behind his back and walked up and down, head bowed.

"War is human, but never humane. But I would do as the heart says," he remarked suddenly.

"The heart!" Carmencita appeared startled. She could not have expected to blush so readily. "I almost believe," she faltered, "I almost think—my heart beats two ways."

At the last her face went into her hands.

"You care—for this Segundo?"

"Father!"

"Then——"

"No, no!" she cried vehemently, springing up. "I do not! Why should I?" She would not face him, but stood looking into the mirror with fiercely questioning eyes. "Why should I? Oh, you little fool," she snapped at her reflection. "You do not know yourself!" And she ran laughing to the father—laughing with tears below the lids. "Am I not hopeless?" she cried.

He patted her head and resumed his pacing.

"No—only a woman!" he said. "Will you tell me what you know, Carmencita?"

But, divided between what she chose to designate as a sense of fairness alone and the given word of a Castilian—for she had promised for the good of the cause to divulge nothing to the priest—Carmencita could not bring herself to the point of confession. And then, she told herself, she did not know all. She shook her head in refusal.

"Not now," she evaded.

"The weight of knowing Segundo is Segovia has been a load for me," said Father Jacques. "He is a bad man to be leading a fight for the same liberty the Americans sought so fiercely a century ago. Ah—what is that?"

The firing broke out in the grove. They looked at each other in alarm.

"The Moros?"

"Tal Placido?"

"A massacre?"

"Come quick to the second balcony! We can see there," cried Carmencita.

His old feet kept poor time with hers up the stairs, and as he joined her she exclaimed, "It is the Moros!"

Following her pointing finger, he saw the Americans running into line to engage the oncoming Moros. What had caused it neither knew. All through the short sharp affray they sat there listening to the screaming Tagalogs, the echoing guns and the yells of the Moros, consumed with fearful curiosity.

"What are they doing now?" she asked some time after the firing ceased. She looked at the squads of American soldiers running into the houses to rout out the Filipinos.

"They are all going toward the parade. I must see what this means," declared Father Jacques.

Todd met them at the door with the order for Carmencita. Together they walked up the street.

"Do I stay here?" she asked Todd at the edge of the plaza.

"The Captain said to report to him, señorita. He is in the hospital."

"Is he—hurt?"

"Oh no, ma'am. But I think somebody's going to get hurt, the way he feels right now! You'll find him over there."



THE Grenadier had preceded her to the sick-room, where Courtney, in company with the other wounded, lay moaning on their cots.

Courtney cried out, as he entered:

"Captain, make these — do something for me!"

"Where's the doctor?" demanded the Captain.

An enlisted corps man pointed to an adjoining room.

"I tried to get him up when the shooting commenced, sir, but he wouldn't stir," said Grimes.

The Grenadier shoved through the door and clutched the drug-sot by the shoulder. The eyes opened vacuously. The Grenadier shook the rag-like form and slapped the pale cheeks until a faint light of comprehension lit the eyes.

"You — pup, get up here and take care of these men!" he gritted.

But it was useless. With an exclamation of disgust the Grenadier threw the doctor back on the cot. In falling, the drug-fiend's head struck the wall. He lay very still.

"Run out in that crowd and see if there's a native *medico* among the Tagalogs," ordered the Grenadier.

The man returned in a moment, saying that, though one had been pointed out to him, the man had denied any ability in that line.

The Captain, having by this time examined the different wounds, slipped off his blouse.

"Any of you men ever stitch a wound?"

All were young enlisted men. None of them had.

"Needles, then, and the silk. Any of you know how to give a hypodermic injection?"

"Don't let 'em do that, Captain—they'll maybe give me too much," Courtney pleaded.

"Here's some half-grain tablets—two of them won't hurt him," suggested one of the men.

Upon the Captain's assurance, Courtney took these; and Carmencita, coming into the room, found a very undignified but very humane Commanding Officer sewing at the wounds of a man who gritted his teeth and strove to choke his outcries.

"Can't I help?" she asked softly.

The Grenadier had not seen her.

"You may if you care to," he said shortly.

She glanced at him quickly. His face had suddenly lost the compassionate softening. He was once more the officer, though a great deal more aloof than usual, and icily polite. She felt that she had been repulsed, though why, she knew not.

"I'll be glad if you'll let me," she said, beating down a very urgent desire to stamp her foot.

"You are at liberty to commence at once," he said.

The rustle of her garments as she breathed, the sweet scent of her person, so utterly out of place in this hell-swept town—these things disturbed him mightily, inexplicably. And, as she was another's, he cursed himself for the growing weakness. He wanted to hurt her, to show her his utter immunity from feminine charms, to repulse any tentative advances toward friendship that she might make. Strangely, he hoped

she would continue making them—so, he told himself, he could continue the satisfaction of repulsing them.

"Is the *medico* ill?" she asked next.

"Very."

"There is a Visayan *medico* here."

"Who?"

"Señor Valero."

"Is that the fellow you saw?" the Grenadier asked the corps man.

"Yes, sir."

"And he said he wasn't a doctor, eh? Good."

A glance at his mouth, and Carmencita opened her lips to speak. But she did not. Inadvertently, she had placed the native doctor in line for trouble. It was too late now to repair the injury.

"I think," she said, coming to a sudden decision, "that your fingers are too big. Let me have the needle, please."

Her hands touched his—small and soft and warm—and, though her eyes were impersonal and remote, the Grenadier drew a deep breath. He, the commanding, found himself obeying without question. Knox thrust his head through the door to see him standing to one side while a rather pale but very determined girl completed the nerve-trying task.

"What the —" whispered Jimmy, then saluted very properly.

"Shall I send any of the men to supper, sir?" he inquired of the Captain.

"No. We'll be through in a minute. Keep them waiting until I get out there."

"Just like him," thought Jimmy, with a grin. "Just like him. Letting these people stand here while he takes care of that one boy!"



HE RETURNED to the parade-ground, where the Moros and Tagalogs were packed and huddled, surrounded by the blue-shirted garrison. It was dark now. Only the lights from many kerosene street-lamps illumined the scene. Under their sickly rays the glowering, questioning faces took on new sinister lines. Jimmy grinned again as he saw some of the Tagalogs look longingly on the pile of captured guns and bolos in front of the guard-house.

"You'll think of something different very shortly, I'll wager," smiled Jimmy.

Turning to Father Jacques, he said, "The Captain will be here in a moment—as soon

as he gets through doctoring that fellow Courtney."

"The American physician is injured?"

"Yes." And Jimmy smiled again. "Ah—here they come now."

Across the parade to the slight rise in front of the guard-house came the Grenadier, the girl following behind. He wasted no time in preliminaries.

"Tell them," said he, "that my first question is: Do any of them know what became of Segovia?"

This Carmencita interpreted. All the Tagalogs caught armed, Knox had segregated at one side. No answer came from these. But from among the larger pack of Filipinos four men stepped forward. They were of the laboring class.

"These men say," Carmencita interpreted, "that they saw several Moros capture Señor Segovia and take him away into the hills. They were working in the rice-fields, unarmed, and could not do anything."

"Why didn't they report to me?"

"Soon after that the fight started and they were then arrested."

"Was Señor Segovia bound? And do they know where he was captured?"

"The Moros came from the direction of their camp," she interpreted. "And Señor Segovia appeared to be wounded. They had him on a pony."

"H'm. Then Segovia evidently got into trouble when he took my message to Momungun." The Grenadier looked sharply at her. He thought *she* knew some of the reasons for the trouble. But he checked himself.

"That'll be all from these four Tagalogs, then," said he. "What I want to know next is: Do any of these people know what started this fight?"

No one answered Carmencita's question.

"The wind didn't start it," said the Grenadier. "See this bullet?" He produced the pellet cut from Momungun. "That's a Mauser. The Americans have no Mausers. You," indicating the Tagalogs caught with arms, "all have—or had. Did any of you kill Momungun or fire those first shots?"

"They were only firing in self-defense," Carmencita ventured.

"Madam," said the Grenadier, "you are not acting in the capacity of attorney for these people. Please allow me to carry this out my own way."

He said it so low that no one but herself heard. She reddened, bit her lip and darted an angry look at him. He *was* a brute! She could hardly control her voice for her next sentence.

"The Tagalogs say," said she, "that they did *not* fire the first shot—that they only commenced firing when the Moros attacked the village. They know nothing about the Moros' reason for attacking the town."

"What do the Moros know about this?"

She questioned them. "They say," she told him, "that they know nothing about the start of it. Their new Dato fell suddenly, shot from the bushes. They thought the *americanos* did it—why, they knew not—and, thinking to kill as many Christians as possible before being whipped, attacked the town."

"They do not know anything about Segovia?"

"Segovia was in their camp some time previous to the fight talking to Momungun. Then he went away. They do not know who took him, or anything about him."

"Why did these fellows lay down their arms so readily?"

"All these men here were slaves. They say that they did not want to fight the *americanos*. They want to work for the pesos and be free men. If the *americano comandante* will take them, they will go to work to-morrow, only they desire to be protected from any Dato who may come in and claim them."

"They will be. And they can go to work. And each man will be paid individually. Their arms, however, will be kept in the guard-house."

This interpreted, the Grenadier turned back to the Tagalogs.

"Miss Carmencita, these Tagalogs still persist in saying they know nothing about the start of this trouble?"

"Sí, señor."

"Sergeant," the Grenadier said suddenly.

"Yes, sir."

"Have five men lay aside their guns and give each and every one of these Tagalogs the water-cure in that moat."

Carmencita looked at him apprehensively.

"What is it you intend?" she asked, not understanding the term "water-cure."

"Watch and see," he said curtly.

It was the second repulse in the last few minutes and she bit her lip anew, but she

watched as directed, and with fascinated eyes.



THE moat, black and deep, stretched east and west along the north side of the parade. Before the shocked eyes of the populace one of the Tagalogs—a clerk well-dressed in starched duck—was picked up bodily, turned head down and thrust into the water. His legs kicked frantically. Bubbles foamed on the surface but he could not break loose. In a moment they raised him.

"Does he know what started it now?" the Captain directed her to ask.

Before asking the question she looked hard at him, her eyes very bright.

"You're a brute!" she whispered, "a brute, a brute!"

The Grenadier bit through his cigar. "Will you please ask that question?" he demanded.

So Carmencita turned reluctantly and spoke to the wretched clerk.

The *hombre* swore by all his saints that he knew nothing of the initial shooting. He said he worked in Sun Tung's store and had just gone home to his shack when the fighting started. He had grabbed his gun and shot in self-defense.

"Give him another dose," said the Grenadier.

But the man stuck to his story. After three immersions without breaking him down, he was placed back with the prisoners.

"Tell them now," said the officer, "that they have seen what we have done to this man." He waved at the sobbing, half-strangled clerk. "And each and every one of those caught with arms will go through the same thing if they do not tell all they know."

All immediately set up a clamor of protest and denials. They had told all, they cried. Not convinced, the Grenadier had them "doused" in the moat. One after another clung to the same story. At the fifth man he held up his hand.

"Enough," said he. "They appear to be telling the truth."

And they were, since those Tagalogs with Segundo who had fired the shots at Momungun had long since escaped to join Segundo's band.

"There is only one more needing that cure. Call that doctor—that Valero."

The sweating wretch shoved out of the pack.

"Are you a *medico*?" asked the American. "Sí, señor, sí, señor."

"Sergeant, give him the cure and give it to him good!"

Into the water went the spluttering, pop-eyed native, to be ducked and swashed until, his lungs near bursting, they flung him sobbing on the bank.

"Put him with the rest of the prisoners," said the Grenadier then. "Next time we want a doctor he'll take pains to answer. A dog that wouldn't help out a fellow human being when he's helpless and close to death deserves worse. Tell him he'll get worse, too, if he makes another false move.

"And now, Miss Carmencita, I want you to tell these people this: They have taken the oath of allegiance. They have been allowed to come back into their own town during a time of war and live as they pleased. They have been treated fairly and have all sworn to lay down their arms. Yet, just now, we find them with guns of every description hidden in their houses. Each and every one of them will be thrown into the guard-house and worked at hard labor until further notice. Let this be a lesson to the rest of the Tagalogs and Visayans in this town. Those who have not been caught with arms can go to their houses now. As for the Moros, they are free men, and can go to their camp. Tell them I will have quarters put up for them as soon as possible. That is all. Tell them to go."

There was some delay when the wives of the prisoners set up a wail. These were quieted, and the parade began to clear.

Knox then put his hand on the Grenadier's arm.

"Did you speak to Father Jacques?" he inquired.

"Let him alone," said the Grenadier.

"Or Sun Tung?"

"His place was searched, wasn't it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then we didn't get him—this time. No, that'll be all."

He turned to see Carmencita already moving off. He had not dismissed her. He started to call her, but stopped.

"No," he said, thinking aloud, "I won't!" and found Jimmy's eloquent eye upon him! Jimmy also thought Carmencita knew something! This perturbed the Captain so

much that he threw away a beloved cigar he was just lighting.

But, on a second thought, what difference did his chum's silent conjectures make? Let Jimmy think what he wanted to. He could not bring himself to question her before any one else. So he said nothing, but followed the example of his hungry men and went to a belated supper.

CHAPTER X

A NIGHT RAID

THAT night, after making the rounds of the outposts in a search for news of Segovia, and finding no trace or word of him, the Grenadier came back to headquarters, went up-stairs, lit a cigar and tossed himself on his bunk. Jimmy, talkative and cheerful, essayed a few comments on the incidents of that stirring day, but soon desisted when he found his Captain in a very uncommunicative mood.

That Segovia was gone was a certainty now. That he was a prisoner in the hands of the Moros the Grenadier more than half believed. But what had led up to the trouble with the Moros—and he strongly suspected Segovia of having a hand in it—was a puzzle. Not such a puzzle, however, that Carmencita might not have cleared it. He thought she knew a great deal more than she had told. But there he paused. He did not want to question her.

And why? he asked himself. The Grenadier had had little in common with women. They did not seek him, nor he them, and both had up to this time been content. His men, his duties, his cigars, his ambition, many books, and a few friends like Jimmy—these had been the companions of this motherless, sisterless youth for some years; and he had been content.

True, he had thought that he would some day marry, if he was fortunate enough to meet the right girl. But marriage was a serious thing. Love, he had told himself, should come slowly, naturally, based on compatible beliefs, tastes and desires. Furthermore She must be American; intelligent, tactful, mature, refined and fully able to meet him half-way in an ideal intellectual companionship.

But what was this new thing in his life? Coping with emergencies was to him as the breath of life. He could see the past, pres-

ent and future in a situation at a glance, and always acted promptly, surely, incisively, with no doubt as to the correctness of his course. Yet now he hesitated in this matter of his own heart.

Here was a girl—and *what* a girl, said his heart!—who, every time he saw her, disturbed him more than he could say. He looked at nodding Jimmy, wondering what that scamp would say were he cognizant of this quandary. He blushed at the thought.

It was quite probable that the unpoetical and urbane young gentleman would have said, "She's got you on her wagon, Grenadier; so let it go at that!"

"And I almost believe that she has!" mused the Captain.

That was the amazing truth of the matter. He wanted to be with her and he didn't know why! He had only known her a few days—no, could not even say that he *knew* her now. Where was the slow and mutual interchange of ideas? What did he know about her tastes?

That she was educated and refined, he conceded. But that she was tactful or mature, or possessed any of the characteristics he had longed for, he did not know. Was she broad? Was she mature? No! he decided.

He forgot that he had never attempted to read between the lines of her character, and had jumped to conclusions. He was inclined to believe her girlishly wilful, and, though intellectual, far from being mature. Furthermore, she was not American, but Spanish, and antagonistic to the core. And yet, notwithstanding all this, he was keenly aware of her amazing beauty—in fact, aware of nothing else.

He glanced at Jimmy again and sighed. As Jimmy would have put it, "He was up a stump!"

Being "up a stump" does not end the argument for a man, however, and the Grenadier found himself tossing far into the night with this in his heart. Segovia, too! He suddenly found that he hated Segovia as he had never hated before—for the simple reason that Segovia was favored of this girl he had known but a few hours!

"And the poor devil may be cut up into strips by now!" he said wonderingly. "But I don't care. H'm. I think I'd better get up and take a walk. I'm getting to be a kid—a poor half-baked kid!"

 HE REACHED for his riding-boots, passed quietly down the stairs and was going out through the headquarters office when a knock at the door hastened him.

"Hello," he said, flinging open the door. "Oh! Well, what do you want?"

"You *comandante*, señor?"

"Yes. What do you want at this time of night?"

The native glanced apprehensively around. "I care spik quiet with the *comandante*," he said. "No cari other *hombre* see me, see?"

"Come inside here."

The man stepped in and a light revealed a Tagalog whose tattered clothing indicated a recent trip in the bush, while his face was lined with horrible scars.

"You speak fair English. Quick, what is it you want?"

"I run 'way from Segundo, señor."

"You did?"

"*Sí*. I came tell *americano* the place Segundo!"

The Grenadier eyed him closely.

"You want to show me the hiding-place of Segundo, eh? Look here, what reason have you got for such an action? Did you belong to Segundo's band?"

"*Sí*, señor. What reason, you say? Look!" The man pointed at his scarred face, tore open his shirt and showed a breast similarly lacerated. "That the reason, señor!"

"What did you do?"

"For nothing—for dirty gun. He is mad—and then—*Madre de Dios*, he cut me."

"The scars are old."

"*Sí*—six mont' ago. First chance—I run."

"How far is it to the place, boy?"

"Not so far. Five-six hour I take you. They no suspicion—no *comprenden'* *americanos* go—then you shoot whole compañee!"

The man's eyes glowed with such evident desire for Segundo's extermination that the Grenadier was for the moment convinced.

"Come with me," he said, and, after waking Knox, he took a lantern and led the way to the troop quarters.



IN THE meantime Todd and his crew of two men were floating out on the tranquil bay, discussing the affair of the afternoon, when McLane, who had just proposed slipping over to the

"Chink's" for a drink, spied a shadow breaking loose from the blackness of the shore. Their lethargy vanished at once. They heeled the *banca* into the breeze and gave chase.

A keen five minutes followed, as the prow cut through the water. McLane was at the helm, Maynard on the outriggers and Todd crouched tense in the bow.

Suddenly Todd challenged:

"Halt! Who's there?"

No answer came from the paddling natives.

"*¿Quién vive?*" yelled Todd, clicking the gun-bolt.

"*¡Amigos, amigos!*" came the answer.

"Then slow up, *amigos*, or I shoot you same as *mucho malo hombre!*"

The fleeing boat stopped, and a light appeared. When the bigger craft slid alongside, one of the pursued was holding the light while the other peered sharply into the water, ostensibly trying to spear a fish.

"Letting on to fish, eh?" grinned Todd.

He glanced into the bottom of their boat. Several sacks of camotes and rice lay there.

"*¿Por qué?*" he demanded.

"*¡No sé, no sé!*"

"Maybe my Spanish 'll stand ventilating, but so'll you, young fellow. I'll bet you savvy this!" He shoved his rifle under the *hombre's* nose. "*Duos hombre no vamoose este chow al Captain Segundo, eh?*" he got out in semi-Spanish.

The pop-eyed man attempted to shove the muzzle away.

"*Sí, sí*," he acknowledged.

"Well," McLane laughed, "let's get busy and dump the stuff into the river. Then we'll take these *hombres* to the guard-house."

But Todd grinned. "I've got a scheme," he said now.

Forthwith, some time later, while Maynard walked the two prisoners to the guard-house, Todd and McLane slipped through the back streets with two sacks of provender and made haste to palaver with Sun Tung. Much rice and much liquid refreshment changed hands. Todd, directing McLane to slip back to the *banca* at once with one bottle, said that he would start for the quarters to "cache" the rest.

It was nearly midnight. Many lights were still lighted on the main *calle*. It would not do to go that way, for a returning patrol might recognize him. It seemed

advisable to slip between the houses until he reached the river *calle*, and then, after hiding the whisky, to walk up the river-bank to the *banca*. With that idea in view, he started up a dark alleyway back of Sun Tung's store.

It was very dark and quiet here. In the stillness he could hear the tramp of number one's feet clear across the parade. There was a light at the head of a cross-alley he had to pass, directly in line with this watchful sentry's beat and, if he happened to see him, and halted him, Todd's whisky as well as his patrol job would "go up in smoke." He hugged the dark side of a bamboo shack that projected part way into the east-and-west alley, and started to cross.

Half-way, he stopped and laid his whisky carefully down. He had bumped against an open door.

"This is the machine-gun shed!" he muttered. "Now how the — come that door open?"

A sneeze from the interior brought Todd around the edge of the door. He peered sharply in, hesitating to enter at first. He could make out the shadowy outlines of the guns to one side, but nothing else was discernible in the darkness.

Something struck him as wrong with the guns. With their canvas jackets on they should have appeared fat and shapeless in the dark. That was it. He could see the barrels.

The jackets, then, were not on! Some one was in there, and for no good.

He debated whether to call the guard. There was but one entrance to the shed, and the man, if he were still in there, was probably hugging the wall by now. Which wall was a problem. He thought again of calling the guard, but the thought of the whisky stopped him.

"I'll take one look, anyhow," he decided, and thrust his head through the door.

A missile sung past him and struck with a thud against the opposite wall. In the same breath a body rushed him from the blackness. Todd's gun came up, but was knocked still higher as the man came under it and grappled with him.

Todd released the rifle. He felt a stinging blow in the ribs and fought to catch the fellow's arm. The next moment they were biting and fighting bitterly on the ground—but only for a moment.

There was a glare of light over Todd's shoulder, a curse and the sound of a heavy blow. Todd rolled free, to see the Grenadier standing over him, a lantern in one hand and his pistol in the other.

"Did he get you?" was the officer's first question.

Todd pulled his shirt out of the belt and craned his head to look at his side.

"Not bad, sir," said he, dropping the shirt and looking at the fallen Tagalog. "I believe you cracked his head, Captain."

"Come in here," said the Grenadier. They stepped out of sight into the building. "How does it come you're up here when you ought to have been on the *banca*?"

Todd sighed. "I was going to go back to the *banca*," said he. "Ordered my men to go up the river. Just arrested a couple *hombres* smuggling supplies, sir. Took them to the guard-house, and was going back to join McLane at the boat."

"Very good. But what's that package out there?"

Todd sighed again—and this time owned up.

"H'm! Now tell me what this *hombre* was doing?"

Todd's explanation prompted a hurried investigation of the guns. Pieces of the breech mechanism were found missing. Some of them were on the floor, and others in the man's pockets. To one side was a small kit of gun-tools.

"Trying to put the guns on the bum," commented Todd. "Sir, shall I take him to the guard-house?"

The Grenadier paused, thinking.

"No," he said. "There'll be a detachment here in a moment getting these guns ready. You go over to the sergeant of the guard and tell him to call a supernumerary and put him over this man until we get out of the post. I don't want it known that we've caught this fellow on suspicion or anything. After that, you report to the first sergeant for straight duty at once. That whisky stunt will just cost you your job."

TODD departed, mourning the loss of his whisky, but glad to have escaped so easily, while the Grenadier, going to headquarters, awakened Lieutenant Grimes and explained the intended march.

"After finding this fellow monkeying with the guns," said he, "I'm at a loss what to expect. You'll take command of the post and keep one of the machine-guns. Place it at the end of the south trench so you can sweep the *potreros* and the ford. Redouble your outposts at once. If this is a lure to get some of us out of the post, I'll find out. But I want you in position to give the Filipinos a hot reception, if they attack the *barrio* while I am gone."

Down at the troop Todd reported to the first sergeant, and wondered to find him fully dressed, spurred and belted.

"Again?" grinned the "top." "Well, go saddle your horse."

Todd found the troop at the picket-line, all talking in low tones and saddling without the aid of lights.

"What's up?" he asked a neighbor.

"Don't know. 'Nother wild-goose chase, maybe. Thought you was on special detail? Did you see the Old Man?"

"He seen *me*," grinned Todd.

"Shut up that noise!" came a sibilant whisper. "Get a double-barreled move on you, too—the troop's fallin' in."

Still wondering, the men formed line, mounted in the darkness and rode off toward the ford, where the Grenadier joined them. With him rode a Filipino on a pony, while behind him trotted the machine-gun detachment with one of the guns dismantled and packed on the backs of mules.

The Grenadier called a corporal to one side, explained his doubts of the Filipino deserter and said, "You ride with him on the point, as he's going to show the way. If he makes a false move, shoot him. Take him ahead now. I want to talk to the troop."

"Men," said he when the Filipino and the corporal had started, "ride up here and form a circle around me so you can all hear. Now I want to tell you just what we're going into. This Filipino came to headquarters about an hour ago with a tale of desertion from Segundo's band and expressed a desire to lead us to his rendezvous as a means of revenge for mistreatment. Just after I decided to go at once, Todd here found another *hombre* trying to harm the machine-guns. But for that incident I might be inclined to take the man's statement as true. It placed the matter in a different light.

"I don't believe him. I think he's either trying to lure some of us from the post so an attack may be successful against the troop left behind or, what is more probable, is trying to lead us into an ambushade. We'll follow him. I don't know what we're going into, but we'll find out. Don't let him suspect anything. If he tries to get away at any time, get him! If we get into it, sit tight and listen to me. Form twos. Forward—march!"

This, an unusual way for an officer to address his men, was the Grenadier's way. It was one reason why the troop swore by him. They pulsed with the assurance in his voice and wheeled into the ford.



PIERCING the gloom of the tropical growth along the river bank, they struck south in the soft ooze at the edge of the coconut-grove and came into a trail running across what is known as the "Valley of Death." The moonlight showed the sunken graves of a Spanish regiment that here had gone down to death, and, close by them, the remains of a railroad, which, intended as a means of supply transportation to Marahui, had been torn up by Moros seeking steel for new bolo-blades. The troop horses picked their way through the ties and tangled grass until, reaching the apex of the narrowing valley, they wended up into the hills, leaving Iligan sleeping in the moonlight behind.

At first it was fairly good going, but soon the troop were forced to dismount. The trail wound and circled, going ever upward. Though it occasionally struck level spots on either side, it clung for the most of the way to cliff walls. In many places the drop was precipitate for a thousand feet. As the cogon-grass had grown long on the trail and often gave a false impression of solidity at the edge, the Captain had the men walk at the animals' heads and crowd in close to the cliffs. Sometimes a horse slipped, but never fatally. So he was able to set a fairly stiff pace toward Maol, near which the deserter said Segundo was located.

With the coming of this chance for action, the quandary had been temporarily driven from the Captain's mind. Perhaps the deserter might be speaking true, after all. Perhaps there had been no collusion between him and the man caught at the guns. In that case he *might* get Segundo.

He pulsed to think of it, for it meant

much to him. At any rate, there was action to be encountered, and that meant something!

At any minute they might be fired on from this labyrinth of gigantic trees encroaching on the trail. The tension of uncertainty engendered by this possible adventure at least served to dull the foolish ache in his breast, and he rode along, observant and vigilant, rolling about in his mouth a cigar which had not been lighted since they started.

For the space of two hours nothing happened. Then, as the light widened in the east and smothered the valley in overhanging mists, the Grenadier closed up with the corporal and the Filipino guide.

"How far are we from there now?" he asked.

The man answered jerkily. "Not far—*poco tiempo* now."

They had arrived on a straight portion of the trail which, rising gently to a nearby highland plain, allowed the eye a clear view for a space of some five hundred yards to the brink. Half-way to the top the forests on the right ceased, and from there to the brink the wall of the valley had been shelved to construct the trail at the proper grade. Thus, while they could see miles to the left, the view to the right oblique was cut off by the steep bank. It looked suspicious to the Grenadier.

"Just how far is it to their place of hiding?" he insisted.

The Filipino had grown nervous with the weight of his part.

"Only a little more far," he said. "I say when so you fix big surprise."

"They're not up there?" pointing ahead.

"Oh, no, no, *Señor el Capitan*. More far than that."

"Does that trail go straight on where it disappears?"

The man said it turned to the right. Thereupon the Captain held up his hand, which the connecting file duplicated. The troop halted silently.

"Watch this fellow now," he ordered. "Shoot if he moves. You three men come with me." He tossed the reins of his horse to the trumpeter, signaled three of the men to do likewise and plunged up the right bank into the forest, the three men following.

The three grinned at each other in silent excitement as they followed the "Old Man."



THEY advanced stealthily on a course parallel with the trail. It was slow and wet work shoving through the vines and verdure soggy with the morning dew. Now and again they were forced to skirt growths of vines between the trees as thick as interwoven wire. Nearing the clearing they grew extremely careful until, halting behind some brush close to the edge of the trail, the Captain smothered a curse. During their walk the light had grown much stronger and from their higher vantage-point they now gained a view of the country for miles around.

A vast panorama spread before them. Behind them, and far below, the roofs of Iligan glistened in the morning sun. Away to the south at their left ran the enormous valley of the Lenamon. A mammoth unending growth of huge trees matted the fissure walls and smothered the distant hills, but here and there a silver thread of water could be seen through the clearing mists, shuddering depths below. One could not see past the high eastern wall of the canyon, but before them lay a highland plain majestic in its magnitude. Undulating like the prairies of our own West, it rolled miles inland, and brought up against a sweep of darkened ridges. These rose in echelon until, immeasurably distant, they were lost in the ghostly inland mists of Mindanao.

But the grandeur of this scene was lost upon them. The immediate foreground rose like a mesa, and on it, dead and denuded above that expanse of gray and somber hills, were the blackened stumps of an old Spanish fort. They thrust themselves up through the grass in strong resemblance to the wobbling headboards of a deserted provincial graveyard. And headboards they were in truth; for, scattered among them, lay the glistening skeletons of a company of Spanish infantry. They had made history in Mindanao, these men, and their bones lay there speaking for them—the message of men who would not run.

The Grenadier's eyes went past them also. He noted the view subconsciously, and read the wordless message in a flash, but his lips, still tight about the unlighted cigar, closed tighter as his eyes went past the skeletons to an array of men beyond the fort.

There, armed with bolos, barongs, spears, old muskets and a few Mausers, were a

horde of nine hundred Moros spread out in battle-array, awaiting their approach.

CHAPTER XI

THE HARVEST OF THE MACHINE-GUN

"SO?" whispered the Grenadier. He saw where the trail turned to the east as it topped the brink. "We were to get up there and run into a surprise, eh?"

From where he lay he viewed the various vantage-points. It struck him as odd that the Moros had not lain in wait for them along the bank. They were all arrayed in the plain some distance from it. They were just far enough from where they lay to blur individual features. Then, remembering that the Moros evidently counted on the Americans fighting in column as did the Spanish, he chuckled. They would learn a few things in a very short while, he decided. And so he shoved his men back.

"They came out for fight," he whispered. "They'll get it!"

Since there was no danger of detection, they walked back at a much more rapid pace than they had set on the advance, and found the troop eagerly awaiting them. Without a word the Grenadier walked up to the Filipino guide and felled him flat.

"Tie and gag him," he said, "and take him to the rear. Unlimber that machine-gun. Every fourth man take charge of the horses and lead them back along the trail."

This was done. Next he ordered: "You dismounted men fall in up ahead here. You and you, lay down your guns and give a hand getting this machine-gun into place. Up she goes into position on this bank."

Behind the grass the men tugged and dragged the gun into a place just at the end of the forest growth. They worked on hands and knees in order to keep hidden behind the grass for the time being. In a moment they were ready. The rest of the men were then spread out in a line of skirmishers along the bank, with orders to keep low and not fire until the word was given.

"The sky must have rained Moros!" said Jimmy, catching a view of them through the grass. "Regular cloudburst! And look at the way they're stacked together, the ninnies!"

"I'm not going to fire on them until they——"

But at this interval the Moros discovered

them. A wave of sound ran over the horde. The Americans had not marched up the trail and wheeled into column like the Spanish; what was the meaning of this move?

Only a few hats were visible. But they were there! Their guttural questions grew to yells.

The pack bellied, broke and became in a flash a swirl of brown bodies, above which danced a myriad of waving bolos. Here and there a spluttering fire burst from them. The slugs whipped and whined and sung through the grass and above the Americans, landing anywhere from a hundred yards in front to a quarter-mile behind in the valley.

"Bum marksmanship!" grinned Jimmy.

"They've started the ball," said the Grenadier. "Sergeant," calling to the machine-gun leader, "you got that range?"

"Yes, sir."

He glanced again at the Moros. They were running toward the *americanos* now, in their racial desire to come to close quarters. Batui was among them, exhorting wildly.

K troop, forced to rise to its knees to see above the grass, waited with fingers tense on the triggers. Troops at drill and troops in action are often two different organizations, but that morning, though facing a horde outnumbering them ten to one, and a horde which, though poor in marksmanship, were terrible with the bolo, they paid the Grenadier a sincere compliment. Not a man fired until the order was given.

"Very good," he said. "All right, sergeant, let 'er go!"

The first crash was a volley, vindictive and ear-splitting. Then each man worked feverishly at his gun-bolt and fought at his web belt for more shells. The machine-gun, bucking and humming like some animate thing, added its stream to the hail that bit into the oncoming ranks. It was like a fire-hose. The sergeant swung the muzzle this way and that until great gaps appeared in the Moro line. Under that shrieking hell of lead they went down in tens and twenties, kicking and fighting, falling in agony among the bones of the Spaniards they had slaughtered in other days.

The mass broke. Then it wavered and disintegrated into puzzled, shocked groups, some already breaking for the rear, some gazing stupidly, a few coming on.

"My God!" yelled one man close to the

Captain. "There's women among them!"

The Grenadier heard and saw. Closer now, he could distinguish the women, who wore the same general style of mantle and sash as the men, and who, because of this and the similarity of their long black hair and style of coiffure, could not be distinguished at a distance. The thing nauseated him.

"Cease firing!" he bawled to the trumpeter.

The rattle of the small arms and the vicious hum of the machine-gun died away.

"Don't fire any——" the Grenadier began.

But the foremost Moros, taking the move as a signal for a retreat, cried out and came leaping for the troop. That there were women among them was now apparent to all.



IT WAS a crucial moment. The soldiers, however, decided in a flash.

These fanatical and sexless Moro women had toiled in the field, were gifted with physiques equal to the men and exceeded many of them in the ability to wield a bolo. They were not women at the time, but human beings whom the blood-lust and Mohammedan exhorters had unsexed. K troop had no choice. And this time the men did not wait for the Grenadier.

"I ain't going to do the Walter Raleigh act for no —— Amazon!" yelled one. He punctuated his sentence with shots.

Much as he deplored it, the Grenadier could not but sanction the men's actions. He yelled, however, "Shoot them in the legs!"

A big body of the horde, emboldened afresh by this charge of the foremost, now came rushing on again.

"——!" said the officer. "Won't they ever quit? Open up that machine-gun again. Quick, now!"

Once more the spat-spat-spat-spat-spat of the gun broke into the fray. Continuous, merciless, it whipped and thrummed and slapped the air with reports. Before the Moros had advanced twenty yards they

stumbled among new piles of dead. They broke again, eddied, ran this way and that, then raced for the hills in a panic. None but the dead and the wounded remained on the plain among the glistening bones.

"Cease firing!" yelled the Grenadier.

The men arose, blew the smoke from their rifles and viewed their work.

"By George!" Knox cried enthusiastically, "that was *some service* we got out of that machine-gun, eh?"

"I'd feel good if it wasn't for those women," the Captain grunted. "Not a man of ours shot or even hurt. But the women—why did they *make* us kill 'em? Men, take your canteens and go among those wounded. Tie up their wounds as best you can—especially the women's."

The average soldier's first thought after a nerve-trying ordeal is for a smoke. His lungs ache for it. Many were thankfully rolling cigarettes, but now they laid down their guns and went forward to help the wounded.

Knox and the Captain had preceded them and were striding among the dead when they stopped, transfixed at a shuddering scream and a sob from the left. One of the men, bending over a woman to give her a drink, had received a stab in the side.

Screaming like a dervish, the woman stabbed him again and again, and he fell sobbing to the ground before the nearest soldier reached her.

"Get back, get back!" the Captain yelled. "I'm not sorry now. By ——, I can't risk men this way! Get back to your horses and we'll all start for Iligan."

The first sergeant closed the soldier's eyes.

"He's dead, sir," he said.

The officer cursed. He swept the Moros with vindictive eye.

"I ought to burn them all alive for that," he muttered. "But I won't. They've had enough. Pick him up and we'll go, sergeant."

"I think we'd better, sir. Do you hear that?"

Coming faintly from the seashore they heard a long, continuous roll of musketry.

TO BE CONCLUDED





The EVEN BREAK

by J.M. Allen

I WAS standin' at the lower end of the bar in Bergen's place absorbin' a lone mug of ale. It was a Saturday night and busy even for that time so I didn't notice the quiet smallish guy in the gray clothes till the big guy got bad, and raised his voice:

"I figger you to be a lobster of the common or garden variety, and that it's up to me to teach you where to get off. You've been allowed to pull cute stuff this long on account of your being a little geezer. But you're now tocin' your dead line. The next warnin' will be a jolt in the jaw."

I turned to slant at the bellicose one—he was at my elbow—and saw a well-built six-foot man, in noisy clothes, glarin' ferociously at a medium-size quiet-lookin' chap in gray clothes. Just behind the speaker was another six-footer who I judged, was givin' Glad Rags the benefit of his moral support, for his mug was adorned with an ugly sneer.

But Gray Clothes' hand, comin' up with the liquor, didn't quiver, and he didn't gulp the drink down like his goat was absent. He sipped it, rested it on the bar and then turned to the big guy quietly.

"Thanks for the warnin'," says he, "but I guess I'll have to depend on my own judgment as to what I shall do," and he turned to his liquor.

"Green," says the big guy—and I could see his fingers was just tinglin' to lay hold of the other, "for the last time, will you back up and out?"

"No," says the quiet guy over his shoulder, "I think not."

"Then," says the other, his jaws snappin'

like a steel trap, "Get right for trouble." And him and his pal went into the crowd and toward the door.

The little guy took another sip.

"Son," says I, thinkin' maybe he don't realize his danger, "them fellows mean to harm you and to do it to-night."

"It does look that way," says he studyin' his booze.

"Well then what are you goin' to do?" says I.

"Why, go home in a minute or two," says he.

"Got a gun?" I wondered.

"Not even a pocket-knife," says he, emptyin' his glass.

"Well, then, what chance have you got against those husky guys?"

"None," says he buttonin' his coat. "I can't lick either one of them."

"Well then go home in a roundabout way."

"And run from them?" says he, just like that, "And run?"

"Then," says I, for this boy had too much good nerve to have to ask my kind of a guy for help, "I've got some business in the same direction as your lodgin'—wherever that is—and I'll walk with you. So don't make me force my society on you, for the only way you can evade this escort is to appeal to the police."



SO WE beat it. His direction led right past my door, and that far it was all peace and quiet. But a block beyond was a tobacco-warehouse which throwed a shadow clear across the street. Also it had a shed over the sidewalk, runnin' the full width of the buildin', which was due

to make all under it dark as a squaw's pocket. There were only the corner lights, half a block away, which offset the shadow just enough to let you almost see.

I figured that right here was where my new pal would need a chaperon the worst, and I wasn't mistaken. As we plunged into the darkness I noticed somethin' movin' against the boxes and things that were stacked against the buildin', and the next minute two men stepped out in front of us and barred our way.

Naturally we hesitated in our tracks.

"Cale Green," says the taller of the two, "now is when you back up, or take an overdue lickin' with interest."

"Parade-dress a minute," I was sayin', steppin' in between, when somethin' hung my foot in the darkness and I staggered forward right on the big guy's toes.

Say, he blowed right up, and I was cruelly enjoyin' the sudden way in which the necessity for consolin' his injured toes took his mind off the premeditated lickin' he had just promised the guy in gray, when two pair of hands—the guy in gray's and the other six-footer's—firmly and ungently removed me from the firin'-line.

"It ain't your put-in, old pal," says the quiet guy, while the tall fellow hemmed me up between two hogsheads.

"I am the only one present," says this guy, "that really enjoys your line of gab, so you talk to me exclusively."

And he jammed me tighter yet into my corner.

Now rough treatment always makes me peevish and I'm too took up with the guy that's takin' liberties with me to notice what passes between the quiet guy and the big one, till, my eyes gettin' set to the darkness, I see them go into action. Well, it was plain that the other guy was appointed to keep me markin' time while the big guy put the fixin's on Cale. So, if I wanted to get into the big game, I had to commence warmin' up where I was.

"Pal," says I, "take your lunch-hooks off my shoulders."

"Lovey," says he, "you stand still and give me your views on the tariff."

So I let fly and caught him nappin'. You see, your amateur scrapper always takes his punch at the other guy's bean and figures the other guy to do the same. Consequently my stomach-wollop had about ninety-eight per cent. efficiency, and doubled him forward

groanin', so that his chin almost insisted on a left uppercut. But gee! he was tough.

That uppercut—it mighty nearly broke the knuckles of my left hand—was due to pile him up, or anyhow, send him backward dazed and wobblin' so that I could stroll after and lull him to rest with a leisurely swing.

But no. Just as I am lookin' to see him reel away, comes an overhand smash out of the darkness above that mighty near drove the button atop of my cap into my skull, and we went to a clinch and short-arm millin'.

Say, it was some hotness! I was fast enough to slip my left forearm across his throat, but he was so big and strong I couldn't near hold my own in the wrestlin'. As my man, puffin' and sweatin', waltzed me, puffin' and sweatin', round and round, tryin' to slip in a back-heel, I saw the quiet guy knocked to his hands and knees. He just missed a vicious kick in the face, and then straightened up and went to it again.

Busy as I was I had to give it to his quiet gameness; for he ain't said a word since we went into executive session, while the big guy has used all the compound words there is in profane language. Also he ain't showed the first symptom of yellow, though all along the very least he expected was a thorough drubbin'. Just took what he couldn't side-step and delivered the best he had.

That takes a man, son; and a game man.

But I ain't situated so I can devote my whole time to admirin' the quiet guy's nerve—wrapped as I am in a bear-hug that's all but crackin' my ribs, and avoidin' a back-heel that's meant to lay me helpless under about two hundred pounds of fightin' wrath, and keepin' my jaw out of line with punches that's meant to end my part of these activities. I am quite busy and in line for bad luck unless I can put my man off quick.

He is tryin' to butt me when I gets a chance to slip my left arm over till my elbow is on his Adam's apple. Suddenly, braced against his circlin' arm, I jam that elbow forward and down as hard as ever I can. That breaks the bear-hug and sends him back just the distance I needed and I let him have six trip-hammer hooks—right—left—right, and repeat—and he broke ground reeling.

It was no time now for correspondence-school fightin', and besides I could feel myself slippin'.

So, measurin' my distance, I planted my right heel, whirled and landed a pivot-blow

square on the burr of my man's ear. Then I rushed over to the other two, for I knowed he was done.

They are down now, all tied in a knot, and what the big guy is doin' to Cale's mug with short-arm jabs is a pity and a shame. I have just attracted the big guy's attention with a smash on the ear, when I hear runnin' feet on the pavement and look up to see a couple of bulls under the corner light makin' it toward us at high speed. Also I hear my man wakin' up.

"Cheese it—cops," says I, breakin' ground. The word "cops" works same as a whiff of ammonia on the bunch, and in no time the two big fellows is stumblin' away headed for a dark openin' between twō buildin's across the street and Cale and I are streakin' back the way we come. There's quite a few people on the street, and, by mixin' with 'em and gradually slackenin' our run into a walk, we are able to turn in at my lodgin's unnoticed while the gang is rubberin' at the approachin' cops. So I turns the guy into my room and then strolls back and stands leanin' against the hall-doorway, for a stall, while the pantin' boneheads are askin' which way we went.

When I get back to my room my new pal is sadly surveyin' his ruins in my shavin'-mirror.

"He sure used you rough," says I.

"He licked the supreme tar out of me," says he, workin' his jaw like it hurt.

"Why?" says I.

"Oh, he just objects to me in general, my looks, my manners, my talk—everything. Ain't this eye of mine a peach?"

"I've got a few specifics for mistreated mugs like yours," says I. "If you want me to, I'll fix you up and tuck you to by-by right here, and in the mornin' you'll be nintey per cent. better in feelin's and looks. What d'you say?"

"Go to it. I'm considerable under obligations to you now, and I'll be glad to be more so. Also I'll thank you more elegantly when it don't hurt so to wag this jaw. My name is Green—Caleb Green."

"Mine is Grant—James U. Grant."

He slanted at me sharp for half minute. Then:

"Say, you ain't Grouch Grant?"

"Not now," says I. "I used to be."

"Not the guy that trimmed Mick Sheahan in three rounds in Pueblo, about eight years ago," holdin' his jaw in his hands.

"Not now," says I. "I used to be."

"Hol-ee smoke!" he says, tryin' to talk with just his lips. "I was within ten feet of you when the knock-out went over, and my last nickel was on Mick. Gee! If I'd just been you a half-hour ago!"

"I didn't have any picnic," says I. "That guy's jaw is reinforced concrete."

"Oh, Lord," says he, startin' a grin that finished a groan. And then:

"Turn on the first aid and tell it to me tomorrow."

So I fixed him up and he hit the hay. And then I lit my pipe and thought him over this way:

He is a good game kid and it's a shame that he had to take a drubbin' just because the other guy is bigger and stronger. And ain't he got the hundred-proof nerve, even when he knows the only way round a trimmin' is to lay down? What would a man with a nerve like that do to a big bluffer if he had science to match against strength? And I could give him that, and then I simply decided that if he hankered for a return go with the big duffer I'd volunteer to teach him what he needed to know; and if he didn't have the hankerin' I'd try to incubate one.

So next mornin' after breakfast—I ordered gruel for him, because chewin' was out of the question—I made him tell me about himself, by way of workin' round to my project. Near as I can remember this was his tale:



"MY DADDY is a little, hard-headed, hard-fisted Englishman, says he. "He came to this country from Birmingham in the early seventies and went to makin' boilers. Now he owns a boiler-shop that's worth between seventy-five and a hundred thousand dollars. He wanted me to be qualified to succeed him, so I started heatin' rivets when I wore knee-pants. When mother died—I was nineteen then—I was gettin' a mechanic's wages.

"Our characters were too much alike for us not to have any friction, but mother kept us gettin' along together somehow while she lived. But after that it was tempered metal against tempered metal. Course my associates was mostly my shopmates, hard-workin', hard-drinkin' fellows, and I got most of their bad habits. Dad used to raise merry heck about my boozin', and one mornin' when I showed up with a bust head, he offered to lick me before the men.

"That very night me and some of my pals

was takin' on a few, by way of taperin' off, when a fight started—just a sociable scrap among pals. In butts a couple of bulls and gets busy with their locust. Suddenly there came a flash and an explosion, and one of the bulls pitches forward on the pavement, coughin' and strugglin', and we all tore off as fast as we could leg it—all but one fellow that the other bull had gone to the pavement with. I hadn't known there was a pistol in the gang, but the next day all of us was under arrest for killin' a policeman.

"Dad got me out on bond. Then he took a couple of hours to tell me he was through with me, and that he would place no more obstacles in my road to blazes. He handed me a couple of hundred dollars and ordered me to beat it and to kindly consider myself an orphan. That isn't exactly his words, but it's the gist of them. He wasn't grieved; he was mad. So, not havin' a chance to explain, I got mad, and made a few unfilial remarks, and took him at his word.

"I haven't seen him since. I've been all over this part of the country since then. I changed my name to Caleb Green and went to work at my trade. After I'd got over my first mad spell, I figured maybe the old man would soften a bit in my absence. So after a couple of years I wrote to him tryin' to make up.

"The answer came mighty prompt, askin' me to stay forgotten; sayin' if I came back, the police would be notified; that, if I wrote any more, the letter would be handed to the officers who had the warrant for my arrest. Dad's name was signed. So after that soaked in a bit I wrote to an old friend of our family and got some dope. He wrote back that Dad was married again; had married a widow with a boy old enough to work in the shop; wanted to give the boy our name and was trainin' him for my place; wouldn't hear me mentioned.

"That took the run out of me, and for the next few years it was the low life for mine, and repeat. Why, man, I've actually panhandled. But poor old dad didn't have any luck with his adopted son either.

"The kid took to the work all right, but in the long run fell to the periodical booze so hard he'd ring in soused in the mornin' sometimes. Once he was so pickled he let a red-hot rivet trickle down inside his workin'-shirt and had to take a month to get some more hide. But it didn't change his ways. So him and dad had more and more rows,

till they grew a chronic grouch and he held his job on account of his mother. So shortly after she died, when he tried to organize a strike, dad flew into him with his fists and the kid knocked him down and kicked him in the face before the other men could interfere.

"That's been some time ago, but—don't you know?—I'd give my last week on earth to meet that kid on even terms.

"But here of late I've braced up. I decided to try to come back and I think I'm makin' good. I blew in here from San Bernardino six weeks ago, and went to work for old Jim Carden. He runs a contract shop with about thirty men over near the railroad-yards. The guy that trimmed me—his name is Wilson—works for him too. Wilson is some boilermaker—I'll say that for him—and when Carden used to have to be away from the shop on business Wilson acted boss. Carden, you know, is like my old man, his own foreman. But since I've been in the shop Carden has got into the habit of leavin' me in charge, and Wilson is jealous.

"Also Carden's daughter Kate was counted Wilson's sweetheart when I came here, but now—well I believe I got an even break with him. So you see I'm between Wilson and what he thinks most of, and he has decided to make me hike out. His method of eliminatin' me involves a series of lickin's, the first of which you witnessed. Now Kate isn't the only reason I don't hike on while I'm still all together, but she's the main one.

"Her aside, I hate a quitter. I won't run from this fellow, and that's all there is to that. Neither will I knock him to Carden. We must work out our differences between ourselves strictly. And finally I want to get to the place where I can go home and make father think better of me, which means I must first be somebody. Then I'm going and ask him about that 'stay forgot' letter, because I have a hunch he never saw mine or wrote the answer.

"His wife and her son were interested in keeping me away. Besides that, my old friend wrote that there is no warrant out for me—the man who did the shootin' confessed and everybody else was let go. So you see, if I could just get along with Wilson, everything would be up to me, except Katie."

"Well then," suggests I, when he'd stopped, "you'd better lick Wilson into good manners."

He grinned and touched his sore eye and jaw.

"Wilson," says he, "is the champion amateur boxer of this county."

"Oh, rats!" says I. "I could learn you how to lick that guy inside of a month, if you want to."

"No, you couldn't do that," says he; "but say, Grouch, couldn't you train me so I could last, say, ten rounds with him? I want—Lord, *how* I want to fight him. But all the fightin' I've ever done—which ain't so little—was rough-and-tumble and, as you see, I haven't a look-in with him there."

"Well, son," says I, "if I couldn't train you to hold that guy even for ten rounds, I'd change my name and take in washin' for a livin'."

"Then go to it," says he. "I ain't holdin' much dough, but say the word, and I will check my balance to you and test old man Carden with an I. O. U. This fight," says he, settin' his jaws hard, "means more to me than I've told you."



SO WE got our noodles together and worked the thing out. He was to see Wilson the next mornin' and challenge him to go ten rounds inside of four weeks—which was sure to listen good to Wilson. That bein' settled I was to arrange a date and place Wilson wouldn't object to. Then I was to put in every evenin' for three weeks, teachin' him the A-B-C of the game of fightin' and the fourth week he was to lay off from the shop and be put in fightin'-shape. I taxed him for my services as reasonably as my conscience would allow.

Everything was settled by Tuesday, for Wilson was anxious to take up where the cops made him leave off. I saw Larry McCue, who runs a boxin'-academy and athletic club, and he was glad to stage the bout when he learned there was to be no purse and that he might use the gate-money for expenses.

Then Cale and I went in for lively evenin's. Twenty-one nights did I put in hammerin' the bottom ideas of the fightin'-game into him—the cover-up, the shift, clinchin', in-fightin', breakin' ground, how to sit and breathe between the rounds—all the A-B-C of it. And he learned not only the how of it all, but the why—not perfect you know, but medium satisfactory. The fourth week was put in mostly in conditionin' him; and it was plenty time, because he was all bone and gristle to begin with.

Cale said old Carden-blowed up when he

heard what was on. Accordin' to Cale, old Carden used to be a sport in the days of John L., but since his daughter Katie grew up she has reformed him so he hates everything uncouth. But Cale said he really thought old Carden was mostly worried about what Wilson would do to *him*. The old fellow (he has a lovely bunch of spinach on his chin) showed up at our trainin'-quarters the middle of the fourth week, and told us all the uncomplimentary things he thought of us and what we were goin' to pull off.

"Mr. Grant," says he, "all fightin' is vicious. Prize-fightin' is doubly so, and this one is simply criminal. Where can I buy a seat?"

Also the old guy told us that the boiler-shop was fight-crazy and that about a third of the dough he had issued out last pay-day was tied up on the question of whether Cale would stay four rounds. The rest was waitin' for ringside odds. Also we learned that Wilson laid off the day after Cale did, to do a bit of trainin'. Then the old gent pointed out how a prize-fight simply made a beast of everybody concerned in it and went to hunt up Larry McCue.



THE afternoon of the fight I turned Cale into the hay for the finishin' snooze that was to send him into the ring just right. Then I went down to McCue's place to be sure things was O. K. McCue had everything fixed up right, even to sofas in the dressing-rooms. Also he had decided on two of his scholars in boxin' for referee and timekeeper, which would have raised a howl from me, only I knowed just how to put it over green officials, while Wilson, bein' an amateur, didn't.

So, borrowin' all the dough I could pry Larry loose from, I made it back down the street. And I touched every friend of mine I met. Also I did some fiscal stunts with pawnbrokers after I had looked in at my quarters. By time to rouse Cale I had dumped a snug little bunch of specie into my grip to tie up some grimy boiler-shop money with.

The go was scheduled for nine-thirty, so I timed our start to get to the hall at ten-fifteen. By that time, it seemed to me, Wilson and his friends ought to have done quite a bit of fidgetin'. I rushed Cale to his dressing-room, told him to take it easy till I got back and, catchin' up my bunch of specie, loitered up to the main hall. It was full of

tobacco-fog and uproar, and the minute their lamps smote my classic mug the gang crowded round me and wanted to know what the—was the matter. Where was Cale? Had he flunked at the last minute? Why didn't I bring him in and let them start?—and a thousand similar. Meanwhile I'm slantin' round and I see Wilson is in the ring already and, from the scowl on him, he is gettin' out of patience. So I make it over to where a couple of his friends is leanin' over the ropes talkin' to him, to get him more out of patience, if I can.

"Evenin', gents," says I; "I'm just about givin' the eager spectators a chance to get their lunch-hooks on a bit of Cale Green money, and I figured that the honor of first grab was due his antagonist. Is it acceptable?"

"It is," says Wilson whirlin' toward me. "What do you offer?"

"One to three that Green is on his feet at the finish; one to two that he stays six rounds; even money that he stays four," says I.

"Put up three twenties then—one each way. Cover it for me, Nick," to one of his pals. "And say you, Mister Man, get that fellow out here some time to-night. You've kept me waitin' an hour."

"Right away," says I, and got busy with the swarm of bills that the sight of my open grip had tempted into view.

Gee, but it was comin' thick! I stretched mine as far as it would go by stretchin' the odds clear out of reason, but those guys had it in their noodles that Cale didn't have a look in and, at any odds, Green money was so much velvet. So they simply cleaned my wallet. I was just easin' out when Old Carden broke through the mob and grabbin' my arm followed me out into the hallway.

"Say, Grant," says he, his spinach aquiver, "don't let that boy get into the ring with Wilson. He'll be ruined for life. Everybody in there thinks so."

"Yes, I know," says I, "that's why I wish I had some more money to put up."

"But you," he says, gettin' confidence from my answer, "you ought to know—tell me—has he got a chance in a million against Wilson?"

"Say," says I in his ear, because some late arrivals was clatterin' up the stairs, "barrin' a fluke he's got him beat now! That's on the level."

"You ought to know, and—goldarn it—I'm almost believin' you just because I hope

it's so. I'll get me a chair right at his corner and then you watch me pull for him."

"Nit—not—no," says I. "You keep as far away from Cale as you can get. You'd be on his nerves in a minute. If you really want to help him, hike out and raise a hundred dollars somewhere, and be in the jam at the right of the door when Cale and I come in, fifteen minutes from now, and slip it into my hand. I want to bet it at the right minute to get Wilson's goat. You'll get it back before we leave the room—if Cale wins. Are you game? Will you do it?"

He slanted at me sharp for a minute.

"I'm game," says he. "I'll do it. I'd do anything for that boy."

And the old sport made for the stairs.

"Cale," said I in the dressing-room, "listen now and don't miss a word. I've got Wilson's goat comin' fine, and things look good. He's peevish and fretful and I've made my little dough give him a hint that we have a painful surprise framed up for him. I have another trick or two to turn after you are in the ring, and then it's up to you.

"Your nerve is all right, but if you think too much about how you hate this guy you'll lose your noodle and I'll bring you out under my arm. Your game is to work his tender feet. Step on them whenever you can, and if he's human it will upset him and his plans complete. That opens him up and in you go and hammer the wind out of him. For the rest fight him just as you've been fightin' me in trainin'. And above all things remember your cover-up. Now let's go."



SO I took him in. The noise dropped at the sight of him and a lane opened for us to the ring. Just inside I felt a little roll slipped into the hand that carried the bucket, but I didn't look around.

The referee, more nervous than anybody else, was in our corner before Cale could sit down.

"Hurry up—get ready."

But your uncle James U. Grant wasn't to be rattled by no hand-picked referee. He had work to do and furthermore he did it. Said work was to beef and keep on beefin' till Wilson got more peevish yet. That work, which took in the subjects of the gloves, the ring, the interpretation of the rules and whatever else I could think of, bein' elaborately done, I give Cale the grand password, "His

feet—then his wind," slips off his bath-robe and get outside the ropes.

They went to it. The big guy did just what I figured he'd do, and Cale fought to order. So the fight opened with a lot of swings that did no worse than graze, on one side, and a pretty bit of breakin' ground on the other. The big guy couldn't have got through Cale's cover-up with an ax. But the goslin's around thought some real millin' was comin' off and got quite excited.

Then suddenly, as a wild right whizzed by, I saw Cale step in and put a fake left over the kidneys. At the same time his left heel was planted square on Wilson's toes—quick nice work. Wilson groaned and lowered his hands just a flash and, smash! a chop to the jaw went over that swung his head half round.

Then Wilson jumped his trolley. He tore in to beat Cale's bean to a pulp, which was just right—for Cale—for he had only to step inside, when a swing started, to get right and left to the wind.

The referee had to grab Wilson and put him away at the gong, he was so crazy, and the howlin' gang was wonderin' how Cale could take so much punishment. As a matter of fact Wilson hadn't landed clean once and Cale hadn't turned a hair.

"You are goin' good, son," says I. "Never mind his jaw just yet. Keep him watchin' his feet and fix his wind."

And Cale, his jaw set hard, answers never a word; just nods.

I think Wilson's men sent him out for the second round with some good advice—good amateur advice. He set himself carefully for a rush which would likely have fixed Cale for a quiet exit. But it never came off. Cale tore into him at an angle, right to the kidneys, stamped his foot and drove him back to the ropes with clean ones in the stomach in a minute. Back he come like a shot out of a gun, and Cale, losin' his head, was about set to meet him half-way.

"Cover up," I yelled just in time, for a vicious swing grazed his shoulder and the back of his head as he bowed forward.

Stamp! went his heel on Wilson's toes again. Then, instead of doin' like I told him, over went that chop to the jaw and Wilson staggered back one step.

"Careful, be careful!" I begged him, but he had the bit in his teeth.

Toe to toe he met the big guy and started a left swing. A straight jab started him

backward and the next second an uppercut passed between his mitts and sent him flat on the mat and out. Say, I had a fit. Here was my teachin', my schemin', and my carefully nursed coin all goin' to the devil on account of a fool kid's hot-headedness. It was too much. Honest, I believe I'd have gone bugs for keeps, only just as the referee says "Eight" the gong rings.

I've got the ammonia workin' on him and he's comin' back by the time Wilson hits his stool.

"What ought I do to you?" I asked him.

"It sha'n't happen again," says he.

But I see a minute rest ain't goin' to be enough. Out comes my little roll of bills and I rush over to where Wilson sits puffin' and sweatin' and grittin' his teeth. The howlin' that had broke out when Cale went down shut off quick. Everybody, includin' the timekeeper, has his lamps on me.

"Fifty dollars even that Cale is on his feet at the end of the fight!" I yells, flirtin' the yellow boys under Wilson's nose. "A hundred even! Are you game?"

He stared like he didn't understand and then Nick covers that before he wakes up.

That was laid away and then I says, "Now fifty more he knocks you out. This bet is open to anybody."

Say it was funny to see them. The whole shootin'-match, especially the timekeeper, sat dazed, till from a far corner come a squeaky voice that I knowed was old Carden's.

"And fifty more on top of that!"

In ten seconds the shock was over, but in that time I had seen what I was lookin' for. I mean I had got the worried look into Wilson's face—the symptom of yellowness: Also I had delayed the next round near a minute; and seconds were worth a hundred dollars apiece to Cale right then.

The timekeeper came back to himself with a jerk and bang! went the gong.

"Stomach, nothin' but stomach, and lay close," I whispered as I lifted out the stool, and Cale went back to work.

Wilson, hot and tirin', was givin' considerable attention to keepin' his poor feet out of Cale's range by now, and took a right and left to the stomach without return. So Cale did it again and then hugged him: What Wilson did in the way of fightin' in the clinch made me laugh.

I guess it made him sore, too, because he threw Cale off by main strength and cut

loose another minute of top-speed millin' and Cale's perfect cover-up was all that saved him. One stray uppercut come through that split Cale's lip, and the mob went wild as he came to his corner with a bloody chin. I looked over and saw that Wilson had bellows to mend.

"Right yet?" I asked spongin' his face.

"Right! Say, Grouch, there ain't a thing the matter with me except I want you to tell me to tear into him. I'm fightin' like you say, but I want to ease my feelin's on him a lot more than I want to win. You don't know what a strain it is for me to look for openings and all that, with this bully in front of me. I'll explode pretty soon!"

"Well, just work his wind through this next round, don't neglect his feet and get to his jaw occasionally, and I really think you may go it plenty after that," I says.

But Wilson was gettin' desperate. I guess he felt himself slippin'. Cale had to take the trouble to him now and that gave him the edge. Worry, worry was all over his mug and he was stallin' for wind. Cale worked like a beaver.

Chug, chug, just above the belt, stamp on or at his poor bruised feet (it worked just as well whether he hit 'em or missed 'em now) and over would go the chop.

Wilson was landin' a clean one occasionally too now, but the steam was gone. I sure didn't envy him the feelin' he must have had in the pit of his stomach. But it was a good idea to see just how much fight he had left in him, so, thirty seconds before the bell, I says "Try him, lad, try him out."

They was fightin' in Cale's corner at the time, with Wilson's back to the rope. Over come one of those dear old haymakers like father used to make, and of course it missed by a block. As a consequence, Cale was straightened out of his crouch by an uppercut to his sore mouth that would have made my little bets curl up and die if the kick hadn't gone out of it, and sent back a step by a straight punch over the heart.

But it never fazed him. Back he come like a cannon-ball, his arms workin' like pistons, tradin' punch for punch and swing for swing with the big guy, his eyes green and glitterin', his jaw set and blood drippin' from his chin. And say, they furnished fifteen seconds of solid fun and amusement. The gang was in an uproar (if I remember right I yelled some myself) and the referee just hung on to a rope and squealed.

Biff, biff; chug, chug; bang, bang. No blockin', duckin' or side-steppin'; just toe-to-toe, heart-rendin' sluggin'. The gong saved the referee from apoplexy, and when they separated I discovered that a little guy with chin-whiskers was swingin' on my shoulder and screamin' at the top of his voice. "Kill him! Kill him, Caleb! Please, please kill him!" Also I noticed that Wilson's legs wobbled as he went towards his seconds.

Old Carden wanted to hug the boy as he sat down but there wasn't time to be bothered with him, so I set him to swingin' the towel.

"Now, lad," says I as I tidied the boy up, "I think you've reduced him to *your* dimensions, so you may now give your feelin's free play. This round ought to cash in all bets."

"Oh, I hope not," says he with a joyless grin. "I can't *near* do all I want to do to him in three minutes."

"Why, son, you're bloodthirsty!" says I.

"Bloodthirsty, —!" says he between his clenched teeth. "Do you know who and what Wilson is? Look over at him. Do you see that red spot on his belly? Well it's a scar from a burn the shape of a rivet, head and all. Now do you know who he is and what —" But the bell cut him short and old Carden had to lift out his stool, for I was dazed.



FOURTH round and the devil to pay. "Wilson," says Cale movin' around his man, easy and quiet and sure, "do you know that you and I learned our trade under the same man? You'll be sure of it when I tell you I was the homeless boy you sent the forged letter to, tellin' him to stay forgot. I've got a long account with you to close and I ask no better chance than this."

And like a tiger he sprung into him and shot punch after punch into Wilson's face till the guy staggered in and hugged him. The crowd had begun to get a different notion of the fightin', and by now was hangin' on the edge of their chairs and breathin' through their mouths. The referee broke the clinch. Wilson, havin' had most of his luck with uppercuts, went back to them, but the nerve was clean gone out of him.

His face was gray, and he looked like he wanted to cry as Cale rushed him from

corner to corner, landin' without troublin' to feint.

Suddenly comin' out of a clinch I saw Wilson jerk his elbow viciously to the side of Cale's chin. But before I could say a word, Cale, staggerin' back as he was, yelled, "Shut up, Grouch. He *didn't* foul me!"

And bang, bang, he smashed into his man again. Wilson clinched without return and, as he blanketed Cale's mitts, he deliberately jerked his knee into the pit of Cale's stomach.

"Foul! Foul!" I yelled, and old Carden echoed. But Cale, purple with the pain of it, gasped, "He did *not* foul me, referee!"

Everybody had seen it, but before the referee could say a word, Cale leaped into his man again, and if ever I saw fury, I saw it then.

Mindin' Wilson's half-hearted blows no more than so many flies, he smashed right and left to his man's mouth too fast to count. Wilson, all in, faltered and broke ground before the ferocity of the attack and was brought to bay in Cale's corner, two feet from where I gripped the ropes.

"Good night, Wilson," says I. "On the jaw, lad!"

And at the word it came over—a full swing that started a yard back. Smack! And Mr. Wilson was face down on the mat, his arms outspread, and the referee begun countin', I *saw* that, but no one man's voice

could have been heard in the yellin' that gang of rough-necks cut loose, not even old Carden's—and he was hangin' on my shoulder.

The next minute we was fightin' our way to the dressin'-room through a riotous and high-larious mob of glad-handers, most of whose grub-stakes had gone on the second-best man. It ain't twenty minutes after when Cale, Carden and me has ducked the noisy mob that's roarin' just outside his dressin'-room', by shinnin' down the fire-escape and easin' round to the side, where I've ordered a cab to be waitin'. I see one across the street and give the hailin'-sign.

The next minute it draws up to the curb, and then a voice comes from the inside:

"Oh, Caleb, Caleb—are you hurt—are you badly hurt?"

Great Scott! It's a woman's voice.

Cale's swelled lips fell apart.

"What! Kate—you here?"

And he disappeared into the carriage door to the waist. So I takes Pa Carden by the arm and, leadin' him a few steps to the side, calls his attention to the beauties of the Big Dipper. 'I've run from end to end of it twice, and am just about movin' over to the north star when we hear, "But Cale, dear, do you mean me to understand that you whipped the brute?"

Which type of language, however soothin' bein' unsuited to public thoroughfares, we unceremoniously drug him away.



A MESSAGE FROM THE BALKANS by Arthur Somers Roche



HE bootblack's hands were shaking; he was making a dull affair of what should have been a shining success.

"What's the matter, Frank?" asked Henderson.

The boy looked up with beseeching eyes. "Much trouble," he said. "You forgive

the bum shine. I have fear. Gotta see Judge disa mornin'."

"Judge? What about?"

"Mustapha Tewfik—you know—he runs the rug shop. He tella cop I say I killa him. Cop gives me paper. I have to see Judge. I run away, cop say, and they catch me and hang me. I stay—I go to jail."

"Let's see the paper, Frank," said Henderson, hiding a smile. He took the summons from the grimy hand of the bootblack and read it swiftly. He smiled.

"Never mind the final polish," he said. "Come along with me, now. I'll see Judge Deems before court opens. I think we'll fix this up."

The bootblack stared at him through tear-dimmed eyes. Then he grasped Henderson's hand and kissed it before the latter could draw it away.

"You feex it up, and, and——" His voice broke.

"Come on," snapped Henderson gruffly. "There's nothing to weep about. I'm not in a hurry. Just take it easy, Frank. There's nothing to worry about."

Smilingly he led the way to the courthouse. A word got him an audience with the Judge.

"Case coming up before you, Judge," he said briefly. "Mustapha Tewfik, Turkish rug-merchant, wants Frank Estafoopoulos bound over to keep the peace. I guess the cloud in the Balkans has begun drizzling here. The Turk says the Greek is going to kill him. Rot! Just give Frank a lecture and I'll stand sponsor for him. All right?"

The Judge smiled assent. The Fourth Estate has power in the courts of law.

"Anything you say, Henderson," he laughed. "But if your Greek friend sticks a knife in the Turk's back——"

"Then there'll be one Turk less in the world. But he won't," said Henderson.

He shook hands with the Judge and hurried from the private chamber. In the court-room he paused by Frank's side. The undersized Greek was staring malevolently at a bearded Turk, who, accompanied by a lawyer, had just entered the court-house.

"Never mind the hard look, Frank," chuckled Henderson. "Promise me you won't threaten him again—or do anything to him."

"I give promise," said the bootblack.

"Good! Now I can't stay here. But the Judge will let you go. Be a good boy, and tell me about it later. Good-by."

He hurried from the building and caught a car for the office, and the incident had almost passed from his mind when next he saw the bootblack. A political trip up the state had kept him from giving his morning patronage to the little Greek for over a week, so he was unprepared for the out-

burst of thanks that almost overwhelmed him.

"So the Judge let you go?" he finally managed to edge into the Greek's volubility.

"He tell Tewfik to be ashame'; fright' of a small feller lika me. Mr. Henderson, you are the greata man. Some day I giva you big present."

"Never mind that, Frank," grinned the reporter. "But perhaps you can give me a news-tip some day. Keep your eyes open. And don't start war on Turkey awhile yet."

The Greek's eyes glowed.

"Not yet," he said, passion in his voice, "but—when war comes—— I hope Tewfik he ees there—for I will be."

"And I hope I am," smiled Henderson. "So you'll go home for war?"

Estafoopoulos looked about him as though fearful of being overheard.

"You want tip?" he breathed. "I give you one. Two thousand Greeks have sailed in past four weeks. Three hundred sail tomorrow. I am of them. There is—war!"

"Oh, I hope not," said the reporter without a change of expression.

"I hope—so!" snapped the bootblack. "There are a million Tewfiks that I hope to kill. But," and again he looked fearfully over his shoulder, "you will not tell what I have told? It is secret."

"It is," smiled Henderson.



BUT the smile faded from his face when he had turned the corner from the bootblack's stand. And it was after three o'clock, two hours late, when he reported to his city editor. After a talk with him, the couple entered the sanctum of the managing editor. Henderson went to the point at once.

"I've been to all the steamship-offices that run to Greece," he said. "The Greeks are returning to their own country. I've had a talk with the Greek consul. He won't say anything, but his manner is enough. I've circulated around the Servian and Montenegrin and Bulgarian restaurants—there aren't many of them. I've heard them talk. I don't care a rap what the London office says; I don't care if the war-cloud has been hovering over the Balkans for fifty years. I tell you, when these men are going home, they're going home because they've been sent for; because there's war in the air. And if the *Star* doesn't

want to send me, I'm going anyway—to free-lance! Does the *Star* send me?"

The managing editor looked at the city editor. He smiled.

"Say, Hendy, where'd you get your first tip?"

The reporter grinned.

"You people always ask that," he said. "You think it's funny. But it isn't. I got the tip on the Larkin murder from a night-hawk cabman. I got the tip on the Mexican troubles from a waiter in a cheap hotel. I tell you, laugh if you want to, but my 'secret service,' as you call it, hasn't fallen down once. There's a method in my making so many friends. It pays. Now—does the *Star* send me, or do I go as a free-lance?"

The managing editor's face grew suddenly serious.

"You're going for us," he said. "As a matter of fact, we heard from Paris yesterday that it seemed that the rumors weren't fakes this time, that there really is going to be trouble. And we'd about decided you were the man to go. And this information about the men going home—well, arrange for your passports and all that—better catch the *Lusitania* at one to-morrow morning—to-night. And, Hendy, good luck to you. And make a lot of friends on the other side. It's going to be hard to beat the censors, you know, if it's anything like the Russo-Jap war. So-long."

Thus lightly do the workers of the Fourth Estate pass out upon the road to danger. The city editor shook hands, the other reporters flocked jealously about him; but no one said anything about possible danger. It was a big chance; the danger was an almost welcome part of the chance.



THROUGH the mountain passes the Greek armies had been streaming for a week. There had been desultory fighting, but the Turk had massed his strength on the Greek frontier. There was time, reasoned the proud Mohammedan, with lofty scorn, to crush the Greek when the fierce tribesman from the north and west had been whipped. Practically unhindered, the Greeks were gaining their foothold on Turkish territory.

Upon the plain of Kossove debouched the fierce Serbs; two hundred thousand of them, as wild, as savage, as lustful for a martial death as any follower of Allah. They, too,

had as yet met with little resistance. And little Montenegro was hurling her mountaineers into Turkish territory. The Bulgar thrashed his way along the shores of the Black Sea.

Here and there the various armies crushed a Turkish force, avenging by Mohammedan blood the shame of generations. And always the Turk, falling back, avoided the real issue. Had the Turk lost the valor that was his by inheritance? Had the Turk, enervated by vice, lost his courage?

A hundred correspondents, flitting on the outskirts of the four allied armies, were feeling with practised finger-tips the remote pulses of the War-thing. But these pulses were far from the heart; the tale they told could not be relied upon. And at Maras, where thirty thousand Bulgars held the Turk in drawn battle, at Maras was the War-thing's heart. And the pick of Europe's correspondents were pent up there, hands shackled, imprisoned, to all intents and purposes, unable to listen to the beating of the War-thing's heart—the beating that would tell the tale of victory or defeat.

The hundred correspondents on the outskirts were heating the cables with their news of victory for the allies. But the victories were trifling matters; the capturing of an unimportant village, the wiping out of a detachment of Turkish cavalry. And the condition of the War-thing could not be diagnosed from these mere symptoms. It was at Maras that the story was; at Maras! And from Maras came not a word to tell whether, in the first great battle of the war, the Cross or Crescent stood supreme.

Between the Tundja and Maritza Rivers stood Maras; and it stood but four miles from Adrianople, where the Turk would make his first great stand, upon the outcome of which stand hinged the life of the war. For if the allies were beaten back from Adrianople it meant that Europe, aghast, would intervene. Europe might intervene to call the Turks back from massacre, indeed, but Europe would not intervene to drive the Turk to Asia. And if the allies won, it meant that all Christendom, complacent, would sit back to watch the further rout of the unspeakable Turk.

At Maras. The wise men of the Chancelleries of Europe sneered at the bulletins from other places. What cared they that the Turk had lost two thousand here, a thousand there, five hundred here again? And

as these same wise men read of the Montenegrin, the Servian, the Greek and Bulgarian rejoicings, they sneered more. For what did these unimportant victories mean? Nothing, to those shrewd minds which read the motive of the Turk.

For the Turk knew his business. The allies were aroused to a pitch of fanaticism. A mere setback would not deter them from their purpose, which was the driving of the followers of Mohammed from Europe. No, the allies must be crushed; they must be defeated so decisively that the memories of the defeat would rise before the eyes of Christendom with all the horror of the crushing of the Crusaders by the great Saladin in the days of old. The Christians must be massacred—by the hundred thousands.

This was the Turk's plan, and the wise men of Europe read it clearly. So it was that the Turk had cunningly allowed his outposts to be driven in, his scattered detachments to be crushed. What did it matter, when, lured by victory, flushed with triumph, holding themselves invincible, the allies would be crushed at Adrianople, and all Christendom dashed from the heights of hope to the abyss of despair?

This was the Turk's plan. At the very outset of the campaign he planned to risk all. And he did not fear the risk. For when did the Crescent fear the Cross? When did the turbaned fanatic fear to pit the fate of Islam against the fate of Christendom? When did the Moslem avoid his foe? The flower of the Turkish army lay behind the walls of Adrianople. Little by little the streaming army-corps of the allies drew closer. Behind his beard the Moslem smiled and muttered strange-sounding prayers and prophecies. For the Turk would fall upon the allied forces, would scatter them to the four winds, and then—

Ah, then! It was for that that the Chancelleries waited; it was for that that thinking Christendom waited with beating heart and heaving bosom. And at Maras, four miles from Adrianople, was the story, and at Maras were the best of the correspondents of the world, with every facility for getting the story save one—they were under guard.

Protests availed them nothing. The Bulgarian commander was polite but inflexible. If the correspondents sent out their shrewd guesses as to his plans, the news would reach Constantinople; from there it would reach

the Turkish commander a few scant miles in front of him.

"After the battle, gentlemen," he said a score of times. "After the battle—then you may tell the story to the world."

"But the world wants to know what's doing now," protested a London man.

"So does the Turk," smiled the Bulgarian General. "You must wait. I am sorry, gentlemen, to seem severe, but—you are under guard, and must so remain until I am satisfied that we lose nothing by your publication of what has been done."

"But can we send stories about what has already happened?" persisted the London man.

The Bulgar's face hardened, though his tone was still civil.

"No," he reiterated flatly. "On what you have already seen you might base prophecies that would prove embarrassing. Again, gentlemen, I am sorry, but—you must remain under guard."

And so, with the booming of none-too-distant cannon to remind them that war was around the corner, the correspondents resigned themselves to wait, though resignation is hardly the word. For not one of them but knew that he could tell the whole story, could guess correctly the outcome of the future fight at Adrianople if he but knew what had happened at Kilisseh, or even what was happening at Maras itself.

And they did not know; could not learn. For the very soldiers who guarded them and brought them food were uncommunicative as the Sphinx. The orders had been issued that the correspondents were to be kept in densest ignorance, and the orders were obeyed. And so they turned to cards and chess to while away the time.

"Of course," said the London *Mail* man, "it's beastly to know that we're the pick of the correspondents, and that we can't get a line into our papers, but—what can we do? I believe the Bulgar Chief would execute us, if he caught us trying to slip away."

"I'd take a chance on that if I thought there was any possibility of my getting by the guards," snapped Henderson.

The *Mail* man's tone hardened. "There isn't one of us, dear boy, I trust," he said coldly, "who wouldn't do the same—but—what have we got to tell? We know there's been fighting around here. But we don't know who won at Kirk Kilisseh. We don't know a blasted thing. Those chaps who

are with the Greeks, or with the Montenegrins, are having it better than we are. They're not seeing anything important, but they're putting facts, figures and dates on the cable, and that's what the papers want. We aren't doing anything, and—won't do anything, until his Bulgar Highness says the word. So there's no use in our getting all heated up about it. It's happened to other and better men than we. In your Spanish war, Henderson, I knew of a score of good men who were absolutely unable to communicate a line to their offices during the whole war. Simply couldn't get to a wire. Weren't allowed to. And the Jap-Russ affair—man dear, we could write our heads off and then the Japs would pretend to send it, and the home-office got never a word. And we had tough grubbing then, too. Now this——” he looked approvingly at the array of wine-bottles sent them by the General's courtesy—“this might be lots worse, Henderson.”

But Henderson only growled inarticulately and the poker-game went on. The New Yorker chafed at the bonds of restraint. It was his first war; also he was young; had come from a country where there are no censors, and where a man, so long as he observes the laws of libel, may write what he wishes and when he wishes. And the *Star* had chosen him for the most important post of the war. He was with the Bulgar column, the first to face the Turk in all his might. Head in hands, he sat despondently, hearing faintly the dull rumble of artillery that had been going on three days.

Three days! God knew what might have happened! The Bulgars might have been defeated; Adrianople might already have fallen, though the latter was not probable. (The Bulgar would wait for his allies before he went to the test of storming the entrenched Moslems. But if he knew what had happened at Kilisseh! That would tell him the story—that, and the knowledge of what was going on around Maras—as to whether the Bulgarians were investing the walls of Adrianople, but four miles away.)

From the window of the hut where they were lodged he could see the activity in the street, but that was all. The moving columns of the Bulgar tribesmen might mean advance; they might mean retreat. They might mean neither; might merely be the shifting of regiments that is always going on in an armed camp.

And his paper had given him what it considered the most important post of the war; and he was falling down! It was no consolation to him to know that a hundred others were also falling down. That is little consolation to any good newspaper man. He clenched his fist and turned from the window. If only he knew a little, on which to base a cable to the paper. He'd take his chances of execution; he'd take any chance, and—he'd get away—somehow—if he had to lick the Bulgarian army to do it.

“Raise you ten.”

“And ten.”

“Let's look. Take it away.”

He turned again to the window, to look upon the motley soldiery streaming through the streets, to listen to their hoarse cries one to the other.

That was better than watching his fellows play poker, than hearing the monotonous “raise,” “call,” “I'll look” that had been their verbal food these past three days.

How on earth could they play poker at such a time? How could they think of cards when outside the Cross and Crescent fought again the century-old battle of the faiths?

“Say, Henderson,” called a Chicago man, “better get into the game here. You'll go batty if you keep wondering how you're going to beat the Bulgar Chief.”

“I'll go batty if I stick around here,” snapped Henderson savagely. “Haven't you any imagination? Can't you see the whole world waiting with——”

“Forget it, and have a drink,” said the London man. “You're going the way all highly strung men go at a time like this. If I were managing editor I'd send nobody but fat men with dull brains on jobs like this. The job doesn't want imagination; it wants patience. Cultivate it, Henderson, my boy, cultivate it.”

“Go to blazes,” snapped Henderson.

A laugh ran around the table, and the players resumed their game, while Henderson again stared out the window of the hut-like barracks which was their jail. Their jail! And these men endured it patiently. How in thunder had some of them gained their reputations, anyway?

There was the London *Mail* man, best known of them all. His reputation as a correspondent was world-wide. So was that of the Paris *Temps* man; the Chicago *Courier* representative. Henderson couldn't understand it. Phlegmatic they seemed to

be; uncaring what went on; ready to learn the news when the Bulgar General was kind enough to pass it to them. Where was all the romance of the war-correspondent of which he had read? This was tamer than sitting through a session of Congress; there was as much certainty, as much calm about the whole proceeding. One knew the senator would stop talking sometime. One knew the Bulgar General would let them send out news—sometime.

Henderson's finger-nails bit into his palms; his teeth ground together. Quick tears were in his eyes. The London *Mail* man had been right in what he had said yesterday.

"The day of the war-correspondent is about done," he had said. "What with field-telegraphs, and land wireless, and the rest of the modern improvements, a man can't hope to beat the world on a story. All he can do is be *exact*. He can get the number of fatalities, the position of the rival armies, and then give his opinion on the logical outcome, based on what events have already occurred. But that is all; he can't make a wild ride through the outposts and find a telegraph-wire some hundred miles away and beat the world. Never again! The best he can do nowadays is take what's told him and then wait his turn at the telegraph-office."

And the others had mournfully agreed with him. Only Henderson had kept silence. And now—the *Mail* man was right! Censored, guarded, treated as prisoners, what chance was there for him to beat the world, to send the *Star* a story that would make it shriek its beat in red letters a foot high? None. Henderson wished that he had been assigned to the Greek column, or to the army of one of the allies that had not penetrated so far into the Turkish stronghold. For he could have been writing human-interest stories, could have been entrancing the world with little tales of valor, that, unimportant, nevertheless were good reading. As it was—he couldn't send a line!

"If I knew," he said to himself, "if I only knew! I'd break away and——"

 HIS mental speech ceased suddenly. He strained himself against the window. There, on a litter, was a wounded man. Nothing novel in that; Henderson had seen hundreds of them in the

past few days, being carried to the field-hospital in Maras. But this man—his uniform was different; he wore the Greek uniform; his face was vaguely familiar. The wounded man looked up and met Henderson's eyes; a moment, in mutually delighted recognition, the two men stared at each other. Then the litter passed around the corner. Henderson, face white with sudden sadness, stepped back from the window. For the wounded Greek was Estafooulos, his bootblack. And he could not go to him, could not comfort the boy's last moments (for his face had been that of a dying man) because of the guard.

"What's the matter, Henderson?" asked the Chicago man.

At the point of blurting out what he had seen, his recognition of the wounded Greek, Henderson caught himself. Of course his fellow-correspondents might unite in a plea that he be allowed to see and comfort the dying Greek, but—perhaps they might not. For all the *Mail* man's talk, rivalry still held sway among them.

"Oh, nothing," he answered lazily. He lighted a cigarette with shaking fingers. That sixth sense of the newspaper man bade him be silent. It also bade him leave the main room where the others played cards and engage the sentry at the door in chat, one-sided, for the Bulgar had no English, save a few broken phrases. But it served; it kept Henderson near the door, where he might intercept any messenger and learn his message without the knowledge of the other correspondents. For he knew that Estafooulos had recognized him, and he felt that he would send.

Nor was he wrong. In half an hour a mounted officer rode to the barracks. He dismounted and spoke to the sentry. Then, in perfect English, he addressed Henderson.

"You knew, in your own country, a man named Estafooulos?"

"Yes," said Henderson.

"He says he saw you as he was carried by here. He wishes to see you."

"Wait till I get my hat," said the correspondent.

Calmly he entered the room and quietly took his hat.

"Where you going?" asked the Chicago man.

"Just to get a breath of air," replied Henderson. "They'll let us do that, thank Heaven!"

Without meeting further question, he left the room, and joined the Bulgarian officer.

"Is he badly wounded?" he asked.

"Dying," replied the Bulgar, shortly.

He seemed to have no wish for conversation, and Henderson attempted no more.

On foot he followed the mounted officer a matter of a half-mile or so. Then, before a large barn, the officer dismounted, exchanged words with the sentry on guard and waved Henderson to follow.

The sight within that barn was one that Henderson was never to forget. On cots, on the floor, huddled in rough chairs, were the wounded—scores of them. Blood-stained bandages were on their heads and arms, and the sweat of anguish dripped from their faces. Doctors and nurses were busy by the cots, of which there were not enough to go round, amputating, probing, sewing. The odors of antiseptics filled the air, mingled with the scent of blood. It was fearful, awesome, noisome and utterly horrible. Henderson blanched. The Bulgarian touched his arm, and left a bearded man with whom he exchanged words.

"Estafoopoulos is dying," he said. "We have told him that he must tell you nothing; that if he does you will be placed in confinement until the end of the war. And I shall be by your side to see that he obeys. Come."

 **THREADING** their way through the cots and chairs and bodies on the rough flooring, they finally reached the bedside of the dying Greek. The former bootblack looked up with a grin. He held out a trembling, feeble hand, which Henderson, wet-eyed, pressed.

"Well," said the wounded boy, "I killa Tewfik."

His grin was ghastly as he looked at Henderson's horror-stricken face.

"Yes, I meeta him—he weeth cavalry near frontier. I killa him—and others. I die happy."

"Oh, you aren't going to die, Frank!" cried Henderson.

The bootblack smiled.

"Oh, yes—I know," he said. "I'm not afraid. I have avenge' some of my country's wrongs. And the war—we win it!" he cried.

"But what are you doing here—in Maras?" asked Henderson.

Estafoopoulos looked at the Bulgar. The officer nodded assent.

"My Captain—he say get news to Bul-

garian army of what has happen. He choose me. I get here—wounded—about to die. But I tell Bulgarian General that—I can not tell you," he said. "They would imprison you. So I can not tell you. But I have told him. I have brought message, and—I die for Greece."

For the moment, Henderson quite forgot the dying man. He could realize only that Estafoopoulos had brought a message to the Bulgarian General; that the Greek Commander had sent the boy through the Turkish lines with information that must be of incalculable value. If only he could get it! The boy's voice brought him to a recollection of where he was.

"I have help save Greece," said Estafoopoulos proudly. "I have help! And I am happy that I die."

"You mustn't die, Frank—you won't!" cried Henderson.

Again the Greek smiled.

"Ask him," he said, pointing to the officer.

The Bulgar solemnly nodded.

"He is a hero," he said. "He has come through the Turkish lines in uniform, because he would not play the spy's part and, wounded, he brought his message. He dies—but what is death?"

"Nothing," cried the Greek, enraptured. "Nothing, o. j—" He paused and his glazing eyes fixed themselves upon the face of Henderson. "You done me favor. You have been—friend," he gasped. "I—never can repay; I—New York. My old stand by the theatre—I lose there. I would go to corner where cars meet if I live—but—I die."

"Don't worry about anything, Frank," counseled the correspondent. "Don't think about those things. Think of—"

Death was a presence new to him. He could not bring himself to utter pious platitudes. Frank seized his hand.

"Listen," he said. "I tell my dream. I would have been bootblack king. I would not stay by theatre where I lose—oh, hundred thousand—I would go to corner where cars meet where I make—hundred thousand. Un'erstan?"

"He's wandering," said the Bulgar. "He's dying."

Henderson, his eyes fixed on the face of the ex-bootblack, made no reply. For the eyelid of the dying boy fluttered. It *winked*.

"I—have—repay!" said the Greek.

There came a rattle from his throat and his head fell back.

Slowly Henderson rose to his feet and looked down upon what had been a living man a moment before.

The Bulgar saluted.

"He was gallant man, this Greek," he said.

Henderson turned to the officer.

"More than that," he said. "He was a loyal friend—to the end."

The Bulgar, aristocrat that he was, raised his eyebrows.

"I should not have imagined you and he were—*friends*," he said. "Master and servant, perhaps, or——"

"He was my very good friend," snapped Henderson, who did not forget a favor. "Listen: will you do something for me? Will you take this money, and have a cross placed above his grave. And," he pressed money upon the officer, "don't have him buried in a trench. I want him to have a separate grave."

Puzzled, the Bulgar took the money.

"I will do it," he promised. "Only—why can not you attend to it?"

"Because I'm leaving Maras to-day," replied Henderson. "If you will take me to the Commander-in-Chief, I will ask for my passports."

 THE Bulgarian General received Henderson in a tent, where he was busied with plans that littered the plain table before which he sat. He looked up with a frown.

"Well?" he asked.

"I want my passports," said Henderson. "I'm leaving."

The General's eyebrows came together. "Where are you going?"

"To Sofia, thence to Constantinople. I think I can get news from the Turkish side. I can't here. The censorship is too rigid."

"But in a few days——"

"You have no right to detain me," snapped Henderson. "I've decided to try the other side. Its censorship can't be any worse than this, at any rate."

The Bulgar Chief looked at the minor officer.

"The Greek—he did not talk?"

"He gave no information," was the reply.

"Pass this correspondent through the lines and give him safe-conduct to Sofia," snapped the General. "Good-by, sir."

His knees trembling with excitement and joy at passing this easy ordeal which he had

expected to prove so difficult, Henderson followed the officer into the street.

"You may pack your things," said the officer, "and I will call for you in an hour, and, if you will permit me, sir, I would like to say that you are making a great mistake. The Turks are more rigid, as regards censoring news, than are we."

"I'll take a chance," replied Henderson lightly.

The other correspondents gathered about him when he appeared in their midst, suitcase in one hand and small bag in the other.

"What's up? Where you going? What's doing?" they shouted at him.

"I'm going to Sofia and from there to Constantinople to join the Turkish forces," said Henderson. "You fellows may stick around here and wait, but I won't."

"Ass!" cried the *Mail* man. "Fool!" cried a score of others.

Henderson smiled grimly. "Maybe," he said, "but—even if the paper fires me for it, I'm going to *look* for news at least. Good-by."

And he was gone. The group stared at each other in silence.

"I wonder," said the London man, after a moment, "if he knows anything?"

"Impossible," cried the others. "Who could have told him? No, he's just quitting—too nervous to stand the strain. Too bad. Nice chap."

And they went back to their interminable poker-game.

Henderson did not sleep that night aboard the train; too nervous he undoubtedly was, but not, as the others believed, because of his temperament. It was because his chance hung on a thread—that he had read aright the cryptic message of the dying Greek.

Next morning he was off the train almost before its wheels had ceased their rolling. Straight to the telegraph-office he made his way. And then, as he had finished the addressing of a cable to the *Star*, he felt a touch on his shoulder. He turned to meet the suavely smiling face of the Bulgarian officer who had taken him to the bedside of the dying Greek.

"We felt that perhaps you knew something," said the officer. "So I followed. Go ahead and write your cable—then let me see it."

Henderson smiled pleasantly. "Ready to arrest me?" he queried.

"More than ready! Anxious!" snapped the officer.

"You surely won't delay the transmission of a business cable, will you?" asked the correspondent.

"Write the message," said the officer, grimly.

Still smiling, Henderson wrote. He handed the wet blank to the officer with a smile. The officer read and his jaw dropped.

"There is nothing. This is all right," he said, at length.

"Thanks," said Henderson. "And now—I'll take the first train to Vienna, if you think you can spare me."

The officer laughed aloud.

"Do you know," he said pleasantly, "I was certain, after thinking about it, that you knew something. Now—*bon voyage*, sir."

Together they walked to the door of the building and Henderson saw, with outward composure but inward dismay, a file of soldiers drawn up on the curb. The officer dismissed them. He turned to the correspondent.

"If I can be of service to you?" he suggested.

Henderson smiled his thanks.

"I'm all right," he said. "Hope to see you after the war."

"Thanks," said the officer. "I hope so, too."

An hour later Henderson was on the Vienna express, *en route*, by a roundabout way, to the Turkish capital and new venture into the war.



THAT night the managing editor of the *Star* stared at a cable just placed in his hand by the telegraph editor. It read:

Dispose of my theatre at sacrifice of hundred thousand. Losing proposition. Equal gain in investing at transfer-point.

It was signed by Henderson. The managing editor read it twice. Then he called the night-city editor.

"Does Henderson live near any theatre?" he asked.

The night-city looked at a little book of addresses.

"I should say," he said at length, "that Henderson lives just opposite the Crescent Theatre."

"Look at this, then, and tell me what you make of it," said the managing editor.

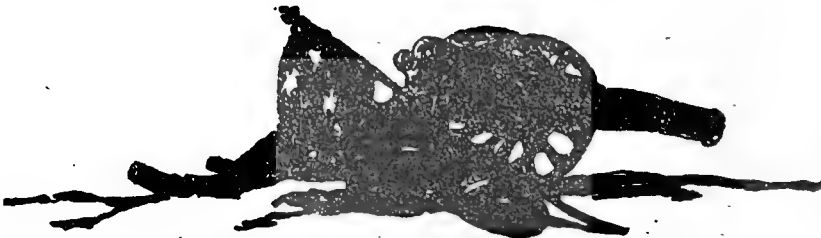
The subordinate took it and read. "Transfer-point——" he said, slowly. "That means a cross-town line—the Cross, and the Crescent——"

"It means the same thing to me!" cried the managing editor. "Listen: The Crescent—that's Turkey—loses a hundred thousand men. The Cross—that's Greece—or Bulgaria—probably Bulgaria—gains as much. Takes that many prisoners. Mac, do you know what that means? Hendy's been in Maras. That means—oh, Lord, there's only one place where such a big battle could have been fought. That's Kirk-Kilisseh! And that means the first big battle of the war has gone to the allies! Spread it all over the front page and sign Hendy's name to it! If the Turks have lost that many men it means that Adrianople has fallen or will fall by to-morrow, and—Play it big, Mac, play it big! We've beat the world!"

The city editor stared open-mouthed at his superior.

"And that young devil Hendy not only beat the world, but he beat the censor! How in blazes do you s'pose he did it?"

"Damfino," snapped the M. E. "S'pose he's got friends there, same as everywhere. Hustle along with that story!"





DOWN THE OLD MISSISSIPP

How three men and a motor-boat drifted into amusing adventures among the river-folk

by Raymond S. Spears

SYNOPSIS—Calliper, Wattics and Coaner, of Utica, N. Y., are loafing down the Mississippi by motor-boat. They pick up a clever and affable stranger named Doldrum, who knows all the devious ways of the river and river-folk, to which they are very green. Doldrum assists them in getting back their boat when it is stolen by Steve Bain, a homeless river-rat. Steve has to swim ashore from the stolen boat. At Hetecs Landing, Steve begs a meal from Lillian Lotus Quallam, a beautiful girl born on the river, who runs a soda-water boat. Just then the motor-boat lands in at Hetecs and Steve sneaks off. Doldrum, who is rather a mystery, goes up-town and amuses himself by picking the pockets of a crowd and stuffing the spoils in the pockets of a darky. Meantime, Steve Bain has stolen Lillian's soda-water boat, while she is up-town, not knowing that old Mrs. Quallam is aboard. Steve awakes in the morning, floating down the river, to find Mrs. Quallam standing over him with a gun, irately demanding to know where her daughter is. The river-rat calmly declares that Lillian has eloped with Calliper the "sport," and promises to go with Mrs. Quallam in pursuit. Lillian has been taken aboard the sports' motor-boat, to look for her stolen boat. Doldrum, fearing that Lillian will reveal him as a shady river-character, slips away as she comes aboard, and hikes down the levee, forgetting his bad luck in his river man's love for the semi-tropical night on the Mississippi bottoms. He comes across old Mrs. Quallam, and dines with her. For Steve has now slipped away from the soda-water boat. He has come across Lillian and the sports, who don't recognize him, and has told them that old Mrs. Quallam has eloped. While the sports are away hunting coons, the soda-water boat, with Doldrum and the "eloped" mother aboard, drifts into the motor-boat, on which are Steve and the "eloped" Lillian.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CANE-BRAKE HUNTERS

IT WAS, as Steve said, a fine night for hunting coons in the brakes. When the three sportsmen climbed the bank, their light showed the woods in a mood different from any they had seen before. The little round white spot-lights shining out from the head-lanterns flickered and flashed as the three turned their heads from right to left and up and down.

Steve took them straight back into the woods, his own yellow head-light glow shining on the moist tree-trunks, on the points of the leaves and the edges of the bark. He went to trees, and examined them for the claw-marks of game. The

three flocked after him, not knowing the rules of the game. Finally he lined them up in a row, thirty to forty yards apart, and they marched through the woods abreast.

It was a sensation, an adventure, of the kind they had hoped for. They drank deep while they had the chance. It seemed as though they were going miles and miles into the swamp.

Back from the river they came to a shoal pond in the woods. The water was only an inch or two deep—the fall from a recent rain. On the edge of the water Steve called the men together and pointed out a muddy place where a coon had pawed in the water, perhaps out of curiosity and perhaps to wash off some tidbit gathered in the woods.

Steve splashed through the water and strolled up to a cane-brake which loomed

green and high ahead of them. With a wicked grin Steve said he was going across the brake. He plunged into it. The sportsmen started in as he had done, but Steve ducked out into the open woods again, and then ran at full speed several hundred yards along the edge of the brake, where he sat down to listen. He had to wait much longer than he expected, but in about ten minutes he heard a yell:

"Who-hoo!"

"Who-hoo!" came an answering chorus from divers places in the brake. Steve cupped his hands over his mouth and yelled as loud as he could, straight down. The yell echoed from seven directions. There were answers to that. Steve walked a hundred yards out into the woods and yelled again. There were answers and shouts and, after a time, Steve stopped. But the three tyros kept on yelling, working together, but far back in the woods. At last Steve grinned and returned to the launch.

The three sportsmen found themselves together again, at last. But, though they yelled and yelled, and heard distant answers, they could not get to him. They wandered together along the edge of the cane-brake. Then they concluded that Steve had gone through to the far side, so they went in single file through the ridge of green fish-poles, and, on the other side, found themselves as far from anywhere as before.

"What time is it? Must be nearly midnight!" Wattics remarked.

But when they looked at their watches they found that it was not yet ten o'clock. They had been out only forty minutes or so. They were astonished, for it seemed as though they had traveled miles and miles, and for hours and hours. They decided to hunt some more and, three in a line, they took a discreet course along the edge of the brake.

Suddenly Wattics discovered a bulky shapeless animal that looked more like an Adirondack porcupine than anything else. He up and shot. The animal fell from the tree it was climbing, and clawed around on the leaves a minute or two. The three gathered around the animal, and whooped with joy. It was a genuine ring-tailed, tree-climbing, jack-lanterned coon!

Nothing would do but they must hunt some more and, with their spirits so thoroughly aroused, they hunted away into the

woods, warning each other from time to time to be sure and keep track of the direction they were going, so they could return safely.

When at last it came midnight they had two coons and a 'possum, and they were satisfied.

"Well, we might as well go home!" Wattics exclaimed. "It's getting late, and I don't believe in killing any more than we need."

"Nor I!" the others answered heartily, Calliper continuing, "When you've got enough, it's enough! Now we better start for the boat. Let's see. We came that way, didn't we?"

"No—we came past that big tree there. I remember that," Wattics said.

"Why *no* we didn't—I remember that fallen log distinctly!" Calliper said with emphasis.

"I don't believe either one of you are right," Coaner argued. "Here's our tracks coming from that direction."

"That's so! But, hold on—there's some more tracks coming from that direction. Why, the ground's all tracked up with men tracks — why — why, I declare! I b'lieve we're lost! Gracious!"

"Oh, well, these woods aren't very big. All we got to do is go in a straight line, and we'll come out all right. Any direction you know. That's the way the guide taught me up in the Adirondacks. Wonder where Steve is? Hope he doesn't get astray. You know, I kind of like that fellow—he has such a naïve way of saying things!"

"So do I. Of course, he's all safe. He's used to it. I'm sorry we got our shouting all mixed up so. I thought you were him when I heard you hollering. I heard somebody off in the other direction, but I went for the most noise."

"We all did, I guess!"



THERE was a laugh, and the hunters started off in single file, going as straight as they could 'in the direction they decided to be an average of their united beliefs. So they came to a bayou in the swamp—a bayou too wide to jump and too obviously bottomless to wade. They followed the bank of the bayou for company's sake and, as the bayou twisted and wound, they shacked into the trackless wilds. There was not a hill to guide them; everywhere were level swamps.

Sometimes they stopped and held consultations. Then they would leave the windings of one bayou and anxiously follow another, far into the deep woods. When their lamps went out they recharged them, and filled them anew with water.

"Well, this is an adventure!" one would say, and receive a doubtful assent.

No night had ever seemed longer to them. Never had tramping been so wearisome. Their game bore heavily on their shoulders, and they traded burdens from time to time. At last they gave up, to wait for daylight. Wearily they sat in a row on a log, silent, thoughtful, asking themselves where they were.

When dawn came they were as much lost as ever. There was no east, no west, no north nor south, for the sun did not visibly rise. The night suddenly faded. They could see the trees, darkly, then as light masses, and at last gloomily in the daylight. They heard turkeys putting and a young gobbler gobbling—wild turkeys without question. They heard them flying down out of the trees. Suddenly there was a parade of lean, sharp-eyed, wonderfully alert birds past them, not thirty yards distant. But not one made a motion to raise his gun, till a huge gobbler suddenly appeared. Then Wattics shot, and the gobbler turned somersaults in a cloud of feathers.

"He only makes more load to carry!" Wattics exclaimed regretfully, as he stared at the magnificent bird.

"Well, we certainly won't starve to death right away!" Coaner exclaimed gladly.

They shouldered their game and, without argument, Wattics led and the others followed, they did not know where.

In twenty minutes they came to a high embankment in a cleared way in the woods.

"The levee!" they shouted gladly, and climbed it with joy and alacrity. The levee would lead them to some house, where they could inquire their way back to the river and to their boat.

They marched down the levee, going to the left, and watched the woods anxiously for the clearing of some brave pioneer—only pioneers would live in such a swamp! They tramped for hours. Suddenly, the levee petered out in an armored nose, beyond which the wilderness surrounded the end of it.

"Good land!" the three said in unison, sitting down suddenly, hungry and tired.

They sat and looked, then they turned to avoid one another's eyes. After they had rested a while, they rose to their feet to start back up the levee, wearily, but clinging to their game nevertheless. On they tramped; sometimes one in the lead, then another. They had courage, however. If they were tired and hungry, they did not lose their tempers nor their patience. They even smiled, for it was certain that the levee would come out into the clearing some time!

Within an hour they came to a little clearing in the woods. In the clearing was a house—a log cabin. From the stick-and-mud chimney blew smoke. In front was a man sitting on the fence that kept the hogs out of the house. He was smoking a Missouri meerschaum.



"GOOD morning," they greeted him.

"Mawnin' suh," he answered.

"Could we get something to eat here?"

"Maw! Kin these-yere fellers git a snack?"

A tall vigorous woman stormed to the doorway, and looked at the three.

"Foh the lan's sakes!" she cried. "Who-all mout you be?"

"Hunters. We have a launch on the river——"

"On the river?" the man exclaimed, "Whar 'bouts?"

"Why—I don't know—we're lost."

"Sho! I knowed yo' was. Well, yo' haint the fust as hunted in the Dark Corner. Dick yere was in theh three days one time, an' he asted me where he was, when he come out! Didn't know hisn's own wife! Well, I expect yo's hongry. I'll set up a snack, gem'men."

In half an hour they were eating a game potpie, and eating it like the famished hunters they were. After dinner they asked the man to take them to the river, for he had told them there was a good path across, if any one knew which way it went. They did not know the bend they had left their boat in, but from their description he recognized Dark Horse Eddy.

When they reached Dark Horse Eddy, the launch was not in it.

"Some river-rat stoled hit!" the swamp

angel commented. "You didn't leave anybody on hit, I reckon."

"Why yes, there was Miss Quallam, the soda-water-boat-owner——"

"Shucks, gem'men! Them riveh-women's wussen the men, an' the men's the dod-ratteddest fellers as eveh walked on two feet!"

CHAPTER XIV

CURIOUSEST WAYS

"OUCH!" Steve Bain whispered to himself, when he heard the voices of the river-women as they looked to see why there had been a collision. "Lawse!—an' hit's cold swimmin'! A feller'd git a cramp!"

Steve had retreated into the cabin of the launch, as soon as he knew that it was Mrs. Quallam's soda-water boat that had found them in the night. He heard the voices of the women raised:

"What yo' anchored out in the channel foh!" Mrs. Quallam cried, "yo' sportin'-fellers!"

"We hain't in the channel!" cried Lillian, with emphasis. "You's in Dark Hoss Eddy. What yo' trippin' night-times foh anyhow, maw?"

"What! That you, Lillian Lotus? Land-a-slashin'! Great guzzard! How yo' like bein' Mrs. Forty-Fo'-Caliber?"

"Gash all c'lamity—theh it goes!" Steve shivered in the cabin, rolling his head from side to side, as he settled back in the big cane chair. "Ain' that jes' a feller's luck! Why couldn't they drap down the riveh, stid of swingin' right into this-yere eddy? Lawse!"

"Mrs. Captain Sto'-Boat Collender yo'se'f!" the daughter retorted emphatically. "Where's that new man o' yourn?"

"New man o' mine? Why, yo' ongrateful critter, whar's yo' husband—that old Forty-Fo'-Caliber feller?"

"What? I ain't got no man. What on earth? Gettin' married made yo' crazy, maw!"

"Crazy yo'se'f! I ain't——"

"Whar's that Steve Bain?" cried the daughter, light coming to her mind.

"Holy Moses! Hyar they come!" Steve groaned, and for a moment he thought of going out the bow windows and overboard. Then he thought of the water coming cold

from the northern valleys, upon which he concluded he wanted to take plenty of time with his thinking.

"Make fast to that timber-head!" Mrs. Quallam shouted.

Doldrum sprang with alacrity, and made a cabin-boat line fast to a cleat of the launch.

"I wisht I had that Steve Bain yere!" sighed Mrs. Quallam.

"Oh, we got him, maw—right yere on the launch—soon's you've tied up!"

"Glory to goodness—hue-e!" the old lady cried, leaping from the cabin-boat to the launch. "I want'er see that feller!"

She stormed into the cabin, and stood blinking a moment in the light.

"Why howdy-do, Mrs. Quallam!" Steve greeted her, putting a book down on the table before him; "where 'd yo'-all come from?"

"What—what—yo' dod-ratted——"

"Why! What's the matter? You know, I seen your gal with those sports, an' I jes' made up my mind to protect her. I didn't dast to leave her. 'Fraid they'd run off with her. So I——"

"Eh—what? Lawse! Lillian! What's this feller—— What's that?"

She paused to listen to Lillian, who had discovered Doldrum.

"That you, Rock Wallers? Come abo'rd hyar, yo' dod-ratted ole riveh-pirate. Lemme interduce ye to maw! Lawse!"

She marched the unwilling Doldrum into the launch, holding him by one ear.

At sight of Bain, Doldrum leaped to the heap of guns on the table and grabbed up two of them. Just as quickly Steve Bain snatched up two more. They threw them to the level, and began to pull the triggers, expressions of increasing pain coming to their faces as the weapons failed to go off. Mrs. Quallam fetched Doldrum a cuff on the left ear that staggered him and he sank to the side-seat, turning to look at the lank woman with even greater alarm than he had shown at the sight of Bain.

"You old fools!" the woman said. "What yo' tryin' to do?"

"Them guns is all empty, maw!" Lillian Lotus exclaimed scornfully. "I tol' Steve so, but he done fergot hit. Where'd yo git this feller, maw? Don't yo' know he's the feller picked yo' stockin' of that money, to Memphis?"

"Great guzzard! Who tole you so? Why

yo' dod-ratted no-'count scalawag! Ain't yo' no manners at all?" Mrs. Quallam yelled. Then she sat back in a chair and heaved a sigh. "This beats me. Ain' yo' really married, Lillian Lotus?"

"Me married? Who tol' yo' that nonsense, maw?"

Steve shrank visibly, and the two women turned to look at him, speechless and towering with wrath that began to rise again.

"I mout of knowed that Steve had told a lie!" Mrs. Quallam snapped. "That feller 'd tell a lie if the truth 'd save 'im from hanging, he would!"

"Yassum!" Steve put in hopefully. "I was borned that way!"

"Poor feller!" Lillian remarked pityingly, and the mother, after scowling a minute, turned her back on Steve and scowled at Doldrum.

"So you're the feller took that money? Sho! Where 'd all them guns come from?" she demanded suddenly, staring at the heap of revolvers on the table.

Doldrum began to chuckle deeply.

"Up to Hetecs Landin'," he laughed. "I was to Hetecs, trippin' with these-yere spo'ts that owns this launch. At Hetecs they was goin' to lynch a feller they ketched—they ketched into the post-office pickin' pockets, an' I had to save his'n's neck. The fellers all went home, lookin' for their guns——"

"That was a dirty mean trick, Rock Waller!" Lillian Lotus exclaimed. "Yo' neveh done no meaner trick in all yo' born days—stealin' gentlemen's guns thataway! S'posen they'd needed 'em, er met somebody they wa'n't friendly with! They never was no dirtier trick——"

"Senct he stoled that money outen my stockin'!" Mrs. Quallam exclaimed, bristling up again.

"Oh, don' get mad, maw. He war borned thataway, same's Steve theh! But wa'n't hit mean—jes' as mean's mean!"

The two men chuckled.

"Where's them spo'ts?" Doldrum asked, looking around.

"Lawse! I plumb forgot them! They went out coon-huntin' an' got lost. Lawse! Pull that launch-whistle theh, Steve, so's they can hear hit."

Steve pulled the cord, and the shrill whistle sounded several times.

"Steve an' them went huntin' an' they got lost. How come hit, Steve?"

"Why, yo' see, we went through a cane-brake, an' they got twisted."

"They's awful twistin', cane-brakes is!" Doldrum remarked, giving Steve a side-long look, to which Steve made reply with a faintest of grins.

"I hollered an' hollered," Steve continued.

"That's right. I hearn 'im!" the girl corroborated.

"An' they kept hollerin' an' hollerin'—an' gittin' funder an' funder away. I was afraid I'd git los' too, so I come to the riveh-bank, an' hyar I be!"

The two women gazed at him sharply for a minute, but his face did not change. The tenseness had subsided, and they all leaned back, the men chuckling and the women sitting up again, to stare at them doubtfully once more.

"What yo' fellers laughin' at?" the old woman demanded.

"I was jes' thinkin' 'bout them fellers trapsin' around theh in the Dark Cohner!" Steve answered.

"Hit ain't no laughin'-matter. Mebbe hit 'll sleet an' they 'll be out theh an' freeze to death!" Lillian snorted. "Come on, maw, le's go home! Men-folks beats all-git-out. Now yo' fellers behave yo'se'ves an' don' yo' play no moh didoes on this-yere boat."

"No'm!" they answered in unison.

Nevertheless, the women, when they went to the deck, ran the landing-stage chain of the cabin-boat *Phizz* around the gasoline engine, under the shaft and through the cleat, and locked it.



WHEN they were gone, the two men sat and looked at each other for a time.

"They ain't no need of our scrappin'!" Bain remarked after a while. "Course, yo' jes' had to let me be strung up!"

"That's so, Steve. I couldn't help hit. I couldn't tell those fellers we'd be'n stealin' and robbin'——"

"Yassuh. This-yere's a nice boat, Rock!"

"Yassuh," Doldrum-Wallers whispered eagerly. "Them women don' need no bo't. Le's——"

"Le's——"

For a long time they talked in whispers. For a long time they sat in silence, after they had put out the lights. Then they crept aft, and untied the rope by which

the cabin-boat had been first made fast to the launch. They pushed the boats apart. There was a faint clank.

"What's that, Rock?"

"Jes' them dod-ratted women, Steve. They went an' chained the bo't to the la'nch!"

"Sho! Them women's bright, Rock. A feller gits up in the mohnin' to git the best of them!"

The two retied the line and crept back into the launch. Closing the cabin-door they retired for the night. They did not awake till morning, when there was a call for breakfast from the cabin-boat.

"Yo' fellers goin' to sleep the whole day?" Lillian asked, when they appeared.

"I was jes' plumb wore out, worryin'!" Steve answered.

"Yo' mout better of worried, you old scoundrall! Sayin' me was married, to maw, an' tellin' maw I was married—— Lawse! Hit jes' beat all-git-out! Me thinkin' maw'd marry that ole store-boater—sho!"

"Yassum. Yo' had me cornered, an' I didn't want to be druv out into the woods!" he explained. "I 'lowed them fellers was goin' to hang me, er I'd neveh stoled yo' maw!"

"You mus' of be'n real des'prit!" she answered sympathetically.

They ate breakfast. By that time the mist had risen, and the morning changed to a raw, cloudy day.

"Lawse! Those fellers is sure gone a right smart in the brakes!" Mrs. Quallam remarked.

"Hit mus' of be'n a terrible night. My lan'! When fellers gits los' they gits wild. Mebbe they're sep'rated. Mebbe they won't neveh git out!" Lillian Lotus surmised fearfully.

"Oh, they're all right!" Doldrum said. "They'll turn up before long. They're all right!"

"I don' expect they'll turn up right yere!" Steve remarked, helping himself to some more warmed-up coon.

"Yo' don't? Why not?"

"Well, yo' see—yo' see—I reckoned yo' wouldn't b'lieve me if I tol' the truth. You'd be mad or——"

"Steve Bain, what yo' done to them po' innocent spo'ts? Yo' ben doin' meanness ag'in?"

"No'm. I didn't kill 'em. Yo' see, I knowed you'd neveh b'lieve they was sech big fools as they is——"

"Fo' lan' sake! What air yo' drivin' at, Steve?"

"Why, yo' see," he glanced at Doldrum hesitatingly, "yo' see, I'd be'n tellin' them fellers what lots of fun hit is to walk the levee, singing the Levee Marchin'-Song, an' they—an' they 'lowed they'd walk the levee!"

"Great get-out! Did yo' evah hear the like of that? Walkin' the levee jes' fer the fun of hit!" Mrs. Quallam tossed her head from right to left, and back again.

"Why didn't yo' tell me that las' night?" demanded Lillian, with exasperated asperity.

"I was 'fraid yo' wouldn't b'lieve me. They ain't no use of a feller tellin' the truth an' bein' called a liar fer hit, is they?"

"Course they ain't. An' theh I be'n worryin' about them bein' lost all night. They think we're goin' to lay yere waitin' for them to come back?"

"No'm. They'd took me with 'em, on'y they knowed somebody'd have to come back for the launch. They said we should drap down to Memphis, an'—an' if they wa'n't there, they'd write to me, er you er somebody——"

"Well, if that's the case, we mout's well pull out fer Memphis. But my lan', don't sports have the curiousest ways! Who evah hearn of anybody walkin' the levee fer nothin'!"

"They's lots wuss things!" Doldrum said heartily.

Lillian laughed aloud.

"Lawse!" she cried. "You know, I was wonderin' who that feller was skipped out when I came aboard the launch. You 'lowed I'd tell 'em how you picked maw's stockin'! Hue-e-e!"

"Hit wa'n't them I was afeared of!" he exclaimed again. "I was 'fraid we'd find yo' maw!"

"Ho law!" the old woman cackled. "Well, we goin' to swing yere all day? Them fellers 'll think we stoled their boat if we don't pull out. You, Rock Waller-Doldrum-Okal—you buffer them boats apart so's they won't rub when we tows down."

"Yassum," he answered with alacrity.

"H'ist the anchor, Steve," Lillian Lotus ordered.

"Yassum," he cried, leaping to obey.

CHAPTER XV

SHANTY-BOAT TRIPPIN'

"GOOD gracious!" Calliper exclaimed. "You don't suppose that girl was one of them, do you?"

"Mebbe she was an' mebbe she wa'n't," the swamp-angel remarked. "But I 'low I wouldn't be surprised. No suh!"

The three gazed first at one and then the other, and it was some time before one of them spoke again.

"Steve suggested we go coon-hunting!" Wattics murmured.

"She didn't hinder us any!" Coaner added.

"He turned up missing pretty unexpectedly!" Calliper suggested, but added quickly, as if he feared to lose all faith in humanity, "perhaps it wasn't here."

"Oh, yes 'twas!" the swamp man explained, "theh's where the la'nch rubbed her nose in the bank!"

The evidence was indisputable. There was the track of the boat and the prints of their own shoes.

"Well, what 'll we do?" Wattics demanded, being a practical man.

"Do?" Coaner snapped with some asperity. "There isn't anything left for us to do! We're done already!"

"Profuse—replete—plethoral!" murmured Calliper. "Piling Ossa on Pelion!"

Then the three all laughed, while the swamp-angel stared at them in guttering amazement.

"Wa'n't that la'nch wuth much?" he asked, doubtfully, upon which the men laughed more than ever.

"It wasn't the value," explained Wattics painstakingly; "we were just thinking!"

"Huh! You mout of done that the fust place!"

"Well—now what?" Wattics asked after a time.

"Keep going on down to Memphis," Coaner said. "What's the nearest road to Memphis?"

"This-yere river, suh! Theh comes a shanty-bo't. They git to Memphis this evenin'—"

"That's so. Holler at them!"

They all yelled and made motions. A yellow shanty-boat floating down the crossing made them out, recognized their hail and came in doubtfully, stopping out in the eddy fifty yards or so.

"These-yere spo'ts wants to drap down to Memphis. Somebody stoled their la'nch!"

"Sho! Bill! Yere's them fellers we hearn about to Tiptonville!" the man at the sweeps called back into the cabin, "come quick!"

A tousle-headed man came to the door and looked out, his face expressing much pleased and gratified curiosity.

"They want to come aboard—to Memphis!" the man at the sweeps explained.

"Mout's well, Jim."

"Reckon so. Hit 'll liven things up!"

"Yassuh—um-m—jes' as you say, Jim."

"Take 'em aboard. I'd like to know who set 'em up this time!"

The two men rowed the cabin-boat in with the sweeps, and then Wattics handed the swamp-angel a five-dollar bill.

"Sho!" he excused himself, "I ain' no change, suh!"

"That's all right, old man. It was worth five dollars, what you've done for us!"

"My lan'! My lan'! Hit 'll buy my wife that new dress she's be'n hollerin' for the las' five yeahs. Yo ain' no idee what a relief that'll be, suh! Lawse!"

"That's all right—and we're obliged to you, besides!"

"Good-by, gen'men!"

"Good-by!"

They could see him, as long as he was in sight, holding the bill with both hands, staring first at the bill, and then after them.



JIM and Bill gazed at them with undisguised interest.

"We hearn tell on ye!" Jim explained. "Some slick feller took yo' la'nch to Tiptonville, didn't they?"

"Yes. But we got it back!"

"You say you did? How come hit yo' lost hit ag'in? Wa'n't nobody on hit, or did they set yo' up the bank?"

"Why—why we went coon-hunting last night, and lost our way—then—probably—This is a very pretty boat you have here."

"Yassuh! Good pine bo't. Who all'd yo' go huntin' with? Didn't yo' leave nobody on hit?"

"Oh, yes. We left some one to watch it. Where'd you start from on the trip?"

"Evansville. Yo' go huntin' alone? Wa'n't no one with ye?"

"Yes, we had a man with us—Steve Bain—"

"Yo' went huntin' with *Steve Bain!* Ho law! Where'd Steve go?"

"Why, we missed him in a cane-brake over there. . . . You're fishermen, I suppose, or hunters?"

"No, we's grafters. . . . Lose *him* in a cane-brake! Hear that, Bill? Los' Steve Bain in a cane-brake? No suh! Yo' know who's got your bo't now, I expect!"

"Why — why — of course — probably Steve's taken it, but——" Wattics retreated to look the cabin over, and Calliper took up the thread of the conversation.

"Yo' ain' neveh be'n on Ole Mississipp' 'fore this-yere trip, I expect?" Jim asked hungrily.

"No. This is our first experience—trip, I should say."

"Yassuh. Hit shore ain't the fust hap-up you-all's had. I yearn yo' stopped to Hetecs Landin', too."

"You did? Why, what—who said——"

"Lawse! They ain' a shanty-boater from Cairo to N'Orleans that ain' hopin' to see you-uns! Hue-e-e! I jes' told Bill we-uns 'd have a plumb amusin' trip this-yere one. You-all's Down-Easters, ain' yo'?"

"We're from New York."

"New York! Say, you know they's lots is glad when yo' Down-Easters comes down Old Mississipp'! Yo' goin' cl'ar to N'Orleans?"

"Why, no. It depends on letters from home we'll get at Memphis."

"Sho! Yo' fellers ain' goin' to leave the riveh to Memphis? Yo' betteh drap down to Lake Providence er Vicksburg. Yo' ain' begun to see the riveh yit, gem'men. Lots of fellers is waitin' foh yo' down b'low. Hit 'll plumb dis'p'int 'em, ef yo' don't come on down!"

"Is that so? Why—what did you say you do on the river?"

"Grafters——"

"What!"

"Yassuh—sell medicine, buy ole brass, play cyards, shoot craps, barber—anything to make an' hones' dollar. We hearn tell on' ye, rubbin' the banks up yere."

"I see."

"Where'd yo' hit the riveh?"

"We came down the Illinois."

"Yassuh. Spo'ts comes thataway, mostly. Lawse! I jes' knowed we'd have a trip, Jim an' me! What yo' goin' to do to Memphis?"

"I don't know. We can't tell till we get

those letters that are probably waiting for us."

"Yassuh. Don' yo' want to buy a shanty-boat? This-yere's a good bo't. Pine an' oak carlins. Jes' yo' look hit oveh, an' see if yo' don' want to buy hit. Them mean riveh-fellers ain' half so apt to steal this-yere as they is to steal a la'nch. That la'nch purty good un? Cost a heap of money, I expect?"

"It was a good one. Cost about forty-five hundred."

"Good lan' a'mighty! Hear that, Bill? That bo't cost fohty-five hundred dollars! Lawse! Ain' yo' fellers rich! Ain' sufferin' much 'count of losin' that la'nch thataway? My lan'!"

"It was a beautiful boat. But we had used it a good deal——"

Jim's curiosity was unsated, but his gift of questions petered out. He listened hungrily to all that was said, and Bill, who was not talkative, walked around and around the men. He looked at them and their corduroy hunting-suits, hefted their guns and picked a BB shot out of the turkey gobbler and another out of one of the coons. Bill plucked the bird, uttering low whistles of delight at the dinner in prospect.

"We ain' much on huntin'," he told the three. For ten days they had shoved down the river, living on nothing but eggs and pork and hot bread and chickens and other tame things, though their tastes ran, really, to good wild meat, which is richer, and holds a man up better when he is rubbing the bank, selling medicine, shooting craps and doing other real hard work, they explained.

 "YO' FELLERS don' neveh do no work, I s'pose?" Jim started in, having seen a new vista of questions ready to put.

"Now that isn't fair!" Wattics began.

"Sho! I wouldn't harm yo' feelin's, suh! I meant no harm, no suh!" Jim cried with real concern, "I didn't mean——"

"Oh, that's all right!" Wattics laughed. "When men have been worked the way we have——"

As he hesitated, the two rivermen straightened up.

"Sho!" Bill cried, with genuine admiration, "you-all's the bes'-natured fellers I eveh did see! Some fellers would of be'n real provoked, gittin' treated thataway on the riveh. I bet yo' fellers got lots of friends, back where yo' come from."

"Dod rat them riveh-rats!" Jim exclaimed. "They'd oughter let up on yo' fellers. Hit ain' right, treatin' strangers thataway. Hit gives riveh-fellers a bad name."

They floated down the bends and reaches in serene contentment. The day gales had passed, and the weather was thickening for a little twister, the rivermen remarked, but it would be a day or two before it would come. They would get into Memphis, they expected, by night. One watched the sweeps and the other got dinner. While he was waiting for the turkey to roast, Jim filled a good line of medicine-bottles, for trade up the banks below Memphis. They did not expect to lay in Memphis more than a day or two, and probably they would have a chance to sell some medicine there. They couldn't tell. Sometimes they had big luck and sold a hundred bottles, and sometimes they sold none at all, and were run out of the landings to boot. They talked with engaging frankness of their business. Their simplicity and unmoral honesty—so to speak—was startling to the three sportsmen.

It was nearly night when the cabin-boat swung down Hopefield Bend, and approached Memphis. The glow of the city overhead and the flashing beauty of the lighted water-front drew the three to the deck to look at it. When the time came to row in to the landing they threw their weight on the oars, and made the mud-bar just above the steamboats. There were several other shanty-boats landed in, dimly seen in the night.

"Now what?" Wattics asked.

"The mail, first," Coaner remarked.

Calliper just then uttered a low exclamation:

"There's the *Moonshine* landed in!"

CHAPTER XVI

WHEN POSIES IS PURTY

AS THE *Phizz*, lashed to the *Moonshine*, floated out of Dark Horse Eddy, and Steve Bain had opportunity to think a moment, he glared at the *Phizz*, on which had appeared Doldrum.

"Ain't that jes' the dod-rattedest thing eveh did happen!" he swore under his breath. "I bet he jes' made up his'n's mind to get this-yere outfit. Um'm."

He left the engine and went into the

cabin where Lillian Lotus was steering the tow down the river.

"Huh—hit's a purty mornin', Lillian," he remarked.

"Shucks! Hit's mistin' up."

"But trippin' thisaway—hit's plumb comfo't!"

"Yes, Steve."

"I ain't had much sech trippin's this yeah."

"I expaict not, Steve—ain' this a purty bend."

He did not take his eyes off her.

"Yassum—I neveh seen hit lookin' purtier. Sho!"

A little later he glanced ahead down the long reach they were entering. The river seemed to be pouring under a far bank. The sides of the stream were in the misty distance. They were out in the middle of a great yellow sea, wrinkled, raw and quivering.

"Hit's comfy in a wahn cabin this moh-nin'," she remarked. "Yo' hain't always had a wahn cabin this-yere weather, Steve!"

"No'm."

"Lawse! What foh yo' so shif'less, an' no-'count?"

"I ain'—I ain' neveh had no chanct! Be'n thinkin' I'd settle down an' be honohable an' respectable, an' neveh steal no moh——"

"Well, why don't yo' then! Theh's lots of work on the Government-works."

"I ain' no-'count workin' thataway. Yo' see, I allus be'n a riveh-man. I kin handle a shanty-bo't like the bes' on 'em. They ain' no kind of gasoline-bo't I hain't took care of."

"Yourn?"

Steve shuffled uneasily, but made no answer for a time.

"No'm," he confessed after a time. "I handled a lot of 'em, though, but hit don' pay. Come easy, go easy and the devil gits the last ones! A feller don' neveh have no luck. I'd had this-yere la'nch, on'y the carbureter was plugged. That's jes' allus the way. Me 'n' another feller took nine hundred pounds of three-quarter-inch line off the Gove'ment-works to Vicksburg, an' come daylight, theh 'twas their measurin' line, an' all painted ev'ry six foot with red, green, white and black. Wa'n't that the slighthenes'! Course we h'isted hit oveh-bo'd."

"That's what yo' git fo' stealin'."

"Don' I know hit, Lillian! Lawse! I ain' neveh had no luck in this ole world! I be'n plumb discouraged."

"You'd ought to settle down an' behave yo'self."

"I be——"

"Shucks!"

"Hones', Lillian! I'm gwine to git a bo't an' be hones' an' sell medicine, an' 'lectric belts—all them kin' of things!"

"When?"

"Jes' soon's Gawd 'll let me! Ain' yo' tired, Lillian? Yo' lemme hol' that wheel. Yo' set down."

"Yo' allus was polite. I bet yo' folks was quality-folks, Steve."

"Yassum. My paw was Cap'n in the Army. Then he took to drinkin' an' shanty-bo'tin'. Maw was a real lady, but she didn' live long. I fergit who she was. Lived to Evansville, an' married paw. Lawse, Lillian, 'f I had a wife, yo' bet I'd be plumb good an' faithful, I shore would!"

"Sho!"

"I would. I'd cut the kindlin's, an' get the wood, an' h'ist the water. She'd neveh have to drive a stake, like some does!"

"I bet yo' would, Steve. Yo' always was good-hearted!"

"I neveh would scare her, either. I'd neveh tie in to a windy bank, er ag'in' a cavin' bank. Them things wears on a woman."

"I 'member paw'd tie in any ole place he could sell a quart of whisky. Maw'd git scairt to death. Hit wore her nerves all out. She wore a 'lectric belt nineteen years."

"Yassum, an' I'd neveh tech a drap of liquor. They ain't no call fer a married feller drinkin'. He has 'citement 'nough! Yassum."

"He shore does. I seen Big Bess throw her man ovehboard in Arkansaw Old Mouth."

"I knowed him—that skinny little feller what always talked so mean?"

"That's the feller."

"Now a man talks mean to hisn's wife ain' no-count. Take hit in the Spring when the blooms is purty, a feller'd orter gin his woman some posies. That's the way them fellers does in the towns. I seen one onct buyin' flowers fer a lady—an old feller, too. I expect she was hisn's wife."

"Lawse! Yo' know jes' how hit's done, Steve!"

"Yassum. I bin thinkin' 'bout hit evah senct I seen—senct I seen yo' down theh to Greenville. 'Member that, Lillian?"

"Sho! Yo' 'member that time?"

"Law! A feller couldn' ferget hit."

"Yo' couldn't? Sho! Yo' jes' happened to——"

"I 'member every time I evah seen yo', Lillian—in Ash Slough, to Evansville, in Little Oklahoma, to Shrevespo't, to N'Orleans—I neveh could fo'git!"

"My lan', Steve!"

"Don' yo' know—don' yo'——" Steve hesitated, and wet his lips, as he marshaled his courage. "My lan', Lillian—hain't yo' neveh s'pected how I be'n suf'ren, all these weeks an' months an' years— Cayn't yo' see—don' yo' know——"

"Steve!"

"Hit's so, Lillian. Lawd knows how I be'n wishtin' yo' an'—yo' an' me could git——"

"Steve!"

With one hand on the wheel, to hold it steady, he reached to put his arm around her neck.

"Yo' need a feller to he'p yo' with the bo't!" he pleaded. "We'd git along like blue jays an' mockin'-birds."

"Sho! Steve, maw'd neveh——"

"She'd neveh know tell 'twar too late. 'Sides—'sides, when she hearn yo' was married—she' lowed, she said, 'Sho, Steve,' she said, 'if she'd on'y married a riveh man—if she'd married yo', er some other feller knowed suntuin', stid of a spo't!'"

"Oh, Steve—do yo' mean that—do yo'?"

"Do I! Why, hit bruck my heart. When we gits to Memphis, you'n me'll jes' slide up to a justice an' git married. Now won't we, Lillian gal, my little summer duck!"

"Cyarful whar yo're steerin', Steve! Maw 'll——"

"Yessum—but we'll git married to Memphis?"

"Oh, Steve! We shore needs pertection, trippin' down this-yere Old Mississipp'!"

"An' I ain' 'fraid of nothin', Lillian!"

"Yas, Steve. Yo' allus was a bold man!"

"I'll be plumb honohable, hones'——"

"Sh-h-h! Yere comes maw!"



IN THE meanwhile, on board the soda-water boat, Doldrum had been leaning back against the wall, thinking glumly of the turn of events. He realized that matters were coming to a crisis,

and that his own dream of ease and comfort down the Mississippi that Winter demanded heroic methods if it was to become a reality.

"We got shet of them spo'ts!" he thought to himself, "but a feller cayn't steal no la'nch off'n them women an' Steve. They's riveh-people, they is. Look the way they chained the b'ot las' night! Steve 'll have 'em set me up the bank, fus' thing I know. Um-m! He kin shore talk, that feller can. If I could talk like him, I'd own a steam-bo't!"

Mrs. Quallam was flourishing around, putting things to rights on the boat. Suddenly she flopped herself down in a chair opposite Doldrum, tipped back against the wall and swung one foot.

"Theh!" she snapped. "That's done. I reckon I'll breathe a spell."

"Yo're an awful ha'd worker, Mrs. Qual-lam."

"That's all women's good for!" she sniffed. "I worked all my life, an' I expect I'll have to keep right on workin'!"

Doldrum wet his lips, as he had a sudden thought.

"Hit ain't right!" he exclaimed. "No woman ought to have to work so. I was thinkin' that when yo' was pullin' them sweeps—that ain't no work for a lady."

"You thought that, Rock? I neveh s'posed any man eveh thought about a woman working!"

"I neveh did b'lieve in no woman workin' like some does on this ol' riveh—cuttin' wood——"

"Many a chunk I've split up senct the Old Man died, an' many a block I cut up befohl!"

"A woman's housework's all a woman ought to do. A man'd ought to do ev'ry-thing else."

"Sho! Yo'd make a good husband, Rock, if yo' practised what yo' preached!" she taunted.

"Sho, Mrs. Quallam—what foh yo' talk thataway! Wa'n't I a good man tell my first wife died theh in the bend?"

"That's so, Rock. Yo' shore hain't eveh ben the same senct!"

"I suffered a heap. Hit made me reck-less an' spiteful. I neveh done no meanness tell she died, 'ceptin' that feller tried to steal her off'n me, when we was cotin'! When I killed him, me 'n' her come down the riveh——"

He drew his wrist across his eyes, with some real emotion.

"Hit were too darned bad, Rock. She were a purty gal. 'Member your comin' oveh to git some liquor, that night she was took bad. Ho law! That's the way of the world! God makes us suffer so's we won't get too sot ag'in leavin' hit. I reckon that's the way on hit."

"I reckon so. He mout let a feller have some comfo't when he gits a taste of hit, though! This-yere's plumb comfo't. But I expaict yo'll shift me, soon's we git to Memphis!"

"Sho! What made yo' reckon that?"

"Why—why—yo' ain't no need of two fel-lers—an' theh's——"

"Well, I reckon ef anybody's shifted hit 'll be——" she jerked her thumb toward the launch alongside.

"I warn't thinkin' so much about that," Doldrum continued hesitatingly. "I war thinkin' as hit wouldn't—hit wouldn't look 'zactly right. Course if we was——"

"That's so, Rock—yo's real thoughtful, Rock. A lady cayn't be too cyarful of her repytation."

"That was what I was thinkin', Mrs. Quallam. I'd make a real useful man, wouldn't I? Don' I know this-yere old riveh? Ain't I one of the bes' shanty-boaters from St. Louis to N'Orleans? I ben thinkin' yo' ladies needed a man—an—— Lawse, Mrs. Quallam, I'd shore make a faithful, stiddy husband——"

"Goodness, I don't know but what yo're right, Rock! I'm gittin' old. I ain't so awful old, either!" She tossed her head. "I ain't but forty-three."

"I'm forty-fo'!"

"What? Laws! Ain't yo' holt yo' age!"

"Yo 'n' me'd make a great pair——"

"My lan'! Lillian'd rear round some!"

"We needn't to tell her!" Doldrum put in hastily.

"That's so—me 'n' yo'll jes' slip ashore to Memphis, an' git married to some Justice of Peace's. We shore need a man."

"Sho! Yo' ain't no idea how happy I be, Mrs. —m-m-m, I neveh did know yo' fust name!"

"Harriet Elizabeth. Maw 'lowed hit were a purty name."

"Purtiest names I eveh hearn, Mrs.—Harriet!"

"Sho! Yo' ole gay-talker! My lan'! Hyar 'tis mos' dinner-time, an' I ben settin'—"

aroun'! Build up the fiah, Rock, an' I'll pick one of them geese."

Doldrum sprang to the task with alacrity, thinking as he did so:

"She neveh would of had me, if she'd knowed I wa'n't more'n thirty-fo'r-five. Um-m."



THEY swung down the crossings, the reaches and bends, and plowed into the Centennial Cut-off, around Brandywine Point, down Fogleman Chute and into the long turn around Beef Island. When it was time for dinner they stopped the launch engine and drifted, so that they could eat in comfort. There was a strained bearing on the part of the women, and the two men ate in silence, cursing under their breaths for nervous fear that something might turn up to interfere with their plans; fearful lest the women betray the scheme to each other.

"I'll cla'r up," Lillian Lotus told her mother. "I'm plumb tired of steerin'."

"I'll tend the engine," Doldrum exclaimed, and the two couples traded boats. So at last they swung in at Memphis.

As the launch pulled the cabin-boat in to the bank Steve and Doldrum ran out the lines, and Mrs. Quallam called from the window:

"Wa'n't that the purtiest landin' you eveh seen made! We neveh will forgit this-yere landin', will we!"

"I expect we won't!" Steve replied with gay audacity.

"Well, I reckon me 'n' Rock betteh go right up-town!" Mrs. Quallam remarked.

"I 'low, I ben jes' hungerin' foh—hungerin' foh some beefsteak. Come on, Rock. Steve 'll drive the stakes, theh. I cayn't wait. I'm mos' sick of game-meat!"

The two went away up the cobblestoned landing, and disappeared from sight.

"That's the way maw allus does," Lillian Lotus told Steve. "She allus rears right up-town, minute she lands in, but neveh mind, honey—our time's a-comin'—we-e-e!"

She smacked him good, but Steve's response, hearty enough, was more or less abstracted. He had been studying the enemy, for he knew his ways, and a vague and suspicious unrest assailed the riverman's heart.

"They won't nobody harm these-yere bo'ts!" he ventured. "S'pos'n' me 'n' yo' slip up-town, Lillian Lotus."

"Maw said——"

"I know—but s'pos'n' they should happen to stay late. Them justices goes home airy. I was afeard——"

"Oh, does they? My lan', le's go right up. I hadn' thought of that. Yo's so thoughtful, Steve."

In five minutes she had put on her town hat and her town dress and her town shoes, and Steve had brushed his hair, and borrowed a suit of clothes, a pair of shoes, a shirt, collar and necktie from the absent sports. In a pocket he happened to find a pocketbook, and his joy knew no bounds when he discovered seven dollars in it.

"Sho! I won' have to borry no money off'n her to pay the feller!" he whispered to himself. "Ain' I jes' the luckiest feller!"

He came swaggering to his sweetheart, who cried:

"My! Steve, yo's jes' the handsomest man, when yo's dressed up! I wisht we had time so's yo' could shave. But hit don' matter. Yo' hair's breshed, an' yo' can shave afterwards."

They hurried up the wharf, and a policeman directed them to a Justice of Peace. In an hour they were back on board the boats, and found the other couple just coming down the landing. Steve and the girl had escaped observation by two minutes and, when Doldrum came aboard with her mother, Lillian Lotus had just time to whisper to Steve:

"I'm glad yo' didn't have time to shave, Steve. They'd shore thought sunthin', if they'd seen yo' all perked up!"

The old lady giggled and cackled, and the young one was prim and dignified. The two men stole occasional glances of triumphant satisfaction at each other and, when their eyes met, there was a taunting gleam and a sly smile, as each rejoiced in the discomfort of the other. Each felt that the other was beginning to understand that he had been hoodwinked, and that the other's smile meant only the sheepishness of a master trickster who has been outwitted, and knows it.

The old lady had purchased not only ten pounds of thick steak, but some bottles of wine, berries, oysters and a basket of fruit.

"I jes' reckoned I'd shore have a good feed fer onct in my life!" she said in a loud, doubt-allaying voice, "an' I knowed yo' men-folks 'd enjoy a leetle mite of wine."

"We shore would!" the men answered in unison.

Lillian Lotus helped prepare the meal with joyous interest. She had brought down some roses to put on the table, and some pie and cake and candy. She sang lightly, as she spread the table, and her mother sang with her:

"I git so sort of hongry fo' flowers in Winter-time!" she said, and Steve's eyes glinted as he realized how his keen observation had helped him to make good in the scheming world. Those flowers had been the happiest stroke of his life, he reflected, as they were sitting down to the prodigal feast.

Just then, in walked the three sportsmen, guns in hand, and looks of uncertain severity on their countenances, at sight of the gay little party.

CHAPTER XVII

THE QUALLAMSES' SNACK

"HYAR they be!" the ladies cried out joyfully. "Hyar come the levee-walkers!"

Steve's eyes rolled uncomfortably, and he sought the face of Doldrum, where there was a flash of wrathful disappointment, as if Steve were to blame for the three showing up at that time.

"We're havin' a reg'lar feast," the old lady cried. "Jes' a wink of a goose, an' I'll have the table sot fur ye. My lan'! Ain' yo' fellers got no sense, walkin' the levee fer the fun of it? Great guzzard! Spo'ts is the curiousest fellers. Gracious sakes! Yo' mus' of humped yo'selves, gettin' yere this evenin'—fohty-seven miles! Lillian, h'ist them table-fixin's so's we kin put in another leaf."

"Lemme he'p!" Steve pleaded, and Doldrum sprang to help, too, lest he seem overshadowed.

Still the three sportsmen stood looking blankly at the scene. Wattics backed out of the room, and shamefacedly drew the shells from his gun. Coaner followed suit. They had not expected so cordial a reception. They had even mistrusted the river-girl, and they were ashamed of themselves. They felt like apologizing even to the two rivermen, who were tugging and pushing, making the table ready for them to sit down to what was apparently a gorgeous feast.

9

"Why — why — we aren't intruding, I hope?" Wattics asked, with just the faintest sarcasm.

"Why—lawse! We be'n waitin' hyar foh yo'!" the young woman exclaimed. "We drapped down the riveh so's you'd find us yere when yo' come down from walkin' the levee."

"Yes—um-m—I see," Calliper answered, still puzzled.

"How did *you* get here, Doldrum?" Wattics asked, mystified. "Last time we saw you was when we landed in to get Miss Quallam——"

"That's a long—a long story and—— *Lemme he'p with that goose!*" was Doldrum's explanation.

In three minutes the table was set with three more plates, and the sportsmen took their places at the prodigal feast which had been prepared.

"We jes' 'lowed we'd have a spread!" the elder woman cried. "A reg'lar bar-becue an' snack an' tastin' things! Hue-e! Riveh-folks gits so they wants excitement!"

Doldrum cut up the thick steak, which had been broiled over a hot hard-coal fire, and passed it around. There were hot-bread, sauces, pickles, apple-butter, a bowl of sorghum, cold roast goose.

"Have some wine?" Lillian Lotus asked the three.

They hesitated, because they did not want to hurt their river-friends' feelings. Wattics and Coaner finally nodded yes, and Lillian said to Calliper,

"I'll get yo' all some sody-water."

"I'd be obliged to you," he said, appreciatively.

"How'd yo' like walkin' the levee?" Lillian asked, roguishly, when they had been eating a while.

Steve started, and shivered.

"Most extraordinary experience!" Calliper answered. "But now that it's over with, I'm very glad that I had the opportunity. I would have felt that I had missed something, not to know about the swamp-lands at night."

"I never begrudged a step I took, walkin' the levee!" Doldrum interrupted, with sincerity.

"Ner I!" Steve added, lest his quiet be regarded with suspicion. "I hit many a mile on the levee!"

"Where'd you disappear to?" Wattics

asked Steve. "We could hear you yell, but we couldn't get to you anywhere——"

"Why—why I got twisted in that-air cane-brake. A feller up-town yere asted me did I see anything of you. Wanted to know where yo' was. Them telegraph-fellers wanted some of yo' gem'men——"

"That's so! I plumb forgot!" Lillian Lotus added. "They be'n up to Ash Slough an' Wolf River, astin' about yo'-all, an' Bill Scarlet, was tellin' us—seen 'im up-town."

"Is that so? Telegram for us? Well, we'd better go find out about that," Wattics remarked. "You know, they've talked about reorganizing father's company there in Utica. Jove! I hope I don't have to go home. But I've been expecting it."

"I'd shore hate to have yo' gem'men leave the river!" Doldrum remarked with heartiness.



THE three sportsmen went aboard the launch, then up-town to the telegraph-office. Wattics's fears were confirmed. They wanted him to go back to Utica and take his father's place in the firm. His father had decided to retire.

"That means settling down," Wattics exclaimed ruefully. "Dod-rat-hit! as our river-friends would say."

"Well, I don't want to stay on the river any longer, if you go home. We can come down again some time," Coaner said regretfully.

"And it's time I took up my work. I feel almost guilty, resting so long!" Calliper added.

"Seeing the river-life 'll make your viewpoint broader—that much higher!" Wattics commented.

"Yes. About those firearms. We can't—we must return them. They aren't ours."

"You mean those that fellow took at Hetecs Landing? Wasn't that a regular river-trick! Think of Doldrum being sort of a river-rat, too!"

"Yes. We'll have to ship them, and we'll give the launch to the Quallams. They'll appreciate it, but I—um-m—I don't understand about our walking the levee—how they——"

"No use trying to bother our heads about that. There's lots of things on this old river that I don't understand," Wattics said, sighing. "I know I never will be contented till I'm a shanty-boater!"

"Um-m—I don't know as I can say

that," Coaner hesitated. "But I'm sure nothing we could have seen in Europe would have been as interesting!"

They returned to the wharf and, going on board the cabin-boat, they found the four sitting in four corners of the dining-room.

"Great guzzard!" the elder woman exclaimed with relief at the coming of someone to tell things to. "What yo's'pose them two's went an' done?"

She pointed at Steve and her daughter with her two hands.

"They's gone an' got married!"

"You 'n' him got married too!" the girl flashed back, blushing.

Mrs. Doldrum blushed as well, while the two men wriggled where they sat.

"Well, I declare!" Calliper cried. "We're glad to know that, aren't we, fellows? We've got to leave the river—got to go back home. So we'll make you ladies a wedding-present of the launch and all it contains, except some odds and ends, and those Hetecs Landing weapons. Of course we never intended to keep them!"

"Course not!" Doldrum chimed in, with a sidelong glance at his wife.

"Great guzzard! Yo' giving us that-air la'nch fo' a weddin'-present!" Lillian Lotus cried. "My lan'! Hain't that handsome!"

"I'll he'p pack up them guns!" Steve remarked, maliciously, as he glanced at Doldrum.

In a few minutes they had turned the search-light on the wharf and, in its light, they built a thick box. Wrapping each gun in a wad of newspaper, they packed it carefully. The box weighed more than five hundred pounds when they had the top nailed down. They addressed it to the citizens of Hetecs Landing, care of Marshal Wifferly, and turned it over to the packet-agent, who sent a gang of roustabouts after it.



AND this box came to Hetecs Landing a few days later, where it quite mystified Marshal Wifferly. When he opened it, he staggered back.

"Holy smithereens!" he cried. "Hits that ole gun of mine—an' I 'lowed hit were los' forever! Sho! Hyar's more guns. My lan'—hey folkses—hyar's our guns all come back!"

"What—hey! Air mine theh too!" voices went up, and there was a scramble that bordered on a riot.

"Hol' on, gem'men!" the marshal shouted, drawing his new gun, and leveling his old faithful, "order, theh! Any feller gits gay 'll git plugged! You Sam Wickers, yo' onpack them guns, an' yo' gin 'em to they owners. That .44's Col. Siplin's. Col. Siplin. That's the gun Wick Gayoso killed Si Peters' dog with. I'd know that anywhere——"

So the guns came back to Hetecs Landing. "Now them fellers was plumb honohable, wa'n't they?" Wifferly said, wiping his forehead, his responsibility done. "I neveh knowed a gang of pocket-picks to be that honohable befoh."

 WHEN the sportsmen had departed from Memphis on the ten o'clock express to the North, Mr. and Mrs. Waller and Mr. and Mrs. Bain returned from seeing them off. The women were very thoughtful. The men were a little anxious.

A crisis was at hand. When, suddenly, Mrs. Quallam pulled loose from her man's arm, and called to Lillian to walk with her, the two men caught their steps together, and tramped along in glum silence. There was foreboding in their hearts, and scant hope. Fortune never had shone on them for more than a day or two at a time. There was no reason for their thinking that fortune would shine now in a perpetual glow of comfort and good luck. They would have been desperately angry with each other, only that they had a common dread, which they knew was only too well founded.

As soon as Mrs. Quallam had her daughter apart from her husband, she began without beating around the bush.

"My lan', Lillian. We's plumb extravagant, gittin' two men thataway. We cayn't afford hit."

"Course we cayn't, maw."

"Well, why don' yo' fiah that Steve out, then?"

"Fiah yo' own man!"

"Shucks, Lillian! What do we want of any man at all? I reckon if we kin trip ole Mississippi seven times an' neveh git tored up once, we kin seven moh times. I don' want no man pesterin' round all the time!"

"Steve ain' no 'count——"

"Rock'd be gittin' 'rested an' all that pocket-pickin'—— He'd cost more'n he'd be wuth. No tellin' what them fellers would do. They jes' 'lowed they'd trick us. Like's not they'll steal ouh bo'ts, way they tried to do them fellers."

"I hadn't thought of that, maw. That's right. Lawse! what'd yo' git married foh, anyhow!"

"Why—I 'lowed we needed a man——"

"That's what I 'lowed. But we don't!"

"Co'se we don't. We'd betteh shift them fellers. They ain't no 'count!"

"We better had, maw. They 'll shore steal ouh bo'ts! They ain' trustable no-how! What we betteh do, maw?"

"Yo' leave that to me. Hey, yo' fellers!"

"Yassum!" the two men answered in unison.

"I'm jes' plumb tired to death! I wisht yo'd go git me a quart of good red lick. Hyar's five dollars!"

"Yassum!" the two cried eagerly, and Doldrum took the bill. The two men walked up Main Street together.

"Ain' she a plumb thoughtful woman!" Steve remarked.

"They ain' many women would of thought of that!" Doldrum remarked with admiration. "She jes' knowed we fellers 'd be thirsty, after bein' with them sports so long!"

They went to the hotel, bought a bottle of good red liquor and had a drink or two themselves on the side. Then they returned to the wharf. They sauntered down among the heaps of cotton-bales, the engines and machinery stacked up for shipment, and rounded to the water's edge. There they stopped short.

"Lawse sake, Steve, where's them bo'ts?"

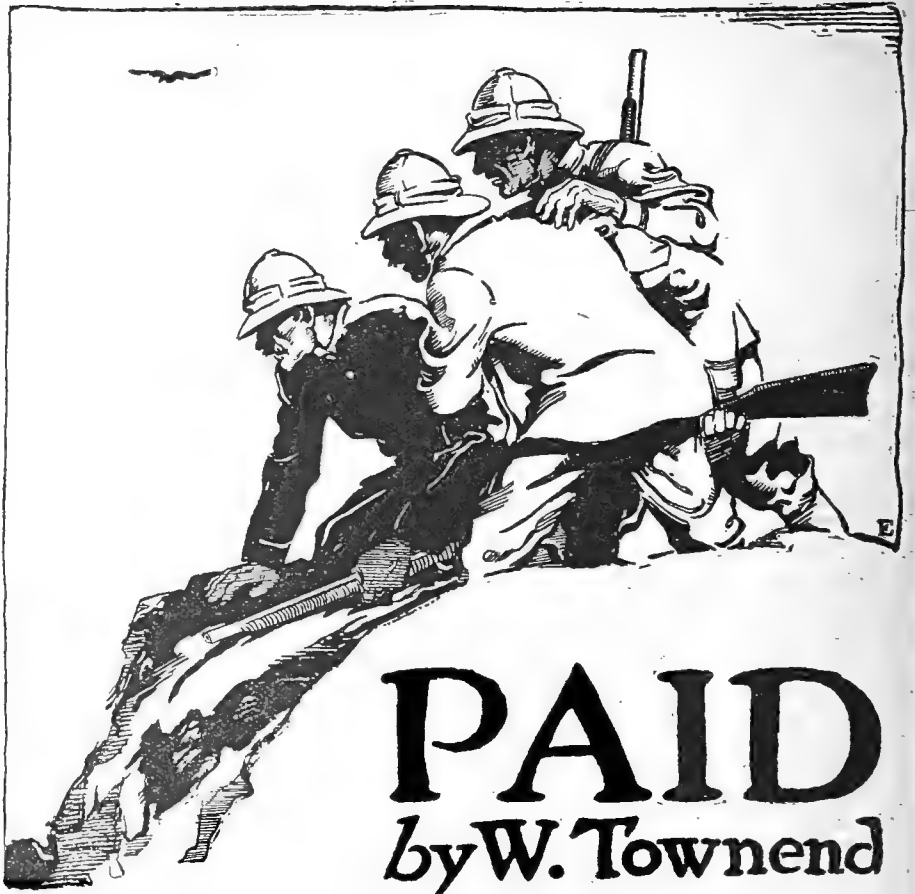
"Sho! They's gone!"

They stared in amazement at the place where the two boats had landed in. Then they glanced down the river. In the night, they could see an open door half a mile away.

"They've set us up the bank, Steve!" Doldrum choked.

"That's what they—— Let's open that bottle, Rock. Hit war real friendly of 'em to think of lettin' us have that, wa'n't hit!"

"Yes, Steve!"



PAID

by W. Townend

FOR twenty minutes my friend, Sergeant Hibbert, had talked of Tommy Atkins as he is and as he ought to be. He had given me his views, at some length, concisely and clearly, on the unimportance of cavalry, the lance and the sword, in modern warfare. He had boldly advocated sweeping reforms and had spoken learnedly on the subject of mounted infantry, the rifle and bayonet. He had also—with the authority of one who has seen much fighting—touched briefly on the use and misuse of artillery in support of infantry, and on the effect of shrapnel on the *morale* of advancing skirmishers.

Finally, as though struck by a new idea, he had raked up an old and never-failing grievance.

"I'm sick an' tired of having it drummed into my 'ead how wonderful they all are—these French, Orstrian, German an' Rooshian conscripts," he said reflectively.

"Possibly they may be, possibly not. We're always being criticized, of course, for something or other, an' told how inferior we are an' so on, but—I dunno. Man to man, everything bein' level, I expect we're as good as any."

Whereupon I asked a question.

"What's that?" said Sergeant Hibbert sharply. "Natives, eh?" He paused, frowning. "Natives, is it? Well, we're better'n Zulus—I've run across them on trek with ox-wagons many a time—an' Somalis an' Matabeles an' Dervishes an' so on. We can't help it. They start chargin' 'arf a mile away with spears an' cowhide shields an' double-anded swords an' old Sniders—an' then wonder why they're killed. I've 'eard fellers say that Omdurman was like killin' tame rats with a stick. But the Pathan, now—well, 'e's a different sort of animal altogether. Man to man, on his own ground, I don't think we were in the

same street with the Pathans. No, sir; that's the truth. Man to man, on those 'ills, they were better than what we were. They knew it, an' we knew it, too, pretty quick.

"There was only one man I ever met who beat the Pathans at their own game. An' he was neither a Sikh nor a Goorkha nor an Afghan nor anything but an ord'n'ry Tommy. An' what's more, that piece of work was a miracle all through; nothin' but a miracle!"

Sergeant Hibbert touched the puckered scar in his right cheek with his thumb, thrust out his lower lip and stared at me very seriously indeed. By these signs I knew that a story would most assuredly follow. And so it did:

THERE were two men in the same Company with me—Dodger Mason an' Jerry Bambridge was their names—that were about as unsim'lar as two men could be, an' yet be friends.

Dodger Mason was a clean-built little man with a good pair o' shoulders and a straight back on 'im. He wore the crossed rifles on 'is sleeve, an' he didn't care a curse for anything in the world save the fit of his tunic an' the taste of the canteen beer.

Jerry Bambridge was just the opposite in every way. We all liked Dodger—we couldn't 'elp ourselves; but to most fellers Jerry Bambridge was a sort o' mystery. A quiet man 'e was; heavy an' slow an' solemn. He couldn't shoot, he couldn't play football or cricket, he couldn't box or sing or run. In fact, 'e couldn't do anything 'cept read books an' argue. He was always a great 'and at an argument, was Jerry.

Yet, with all this unsimilarity, 'im an' Dodger coupled better'n any two men I ever knew, before or since. What one 'ad, the other was welcome to: money, beer, baccy, grub—it made no diff'rence. An' when Dodger was doin' a spell of C. B. an' pack-drill—a habit of 'is after pay-day—Jerry was like a dog with the mange, 'cause 'e couldn't do 'is share. Of course Dodger was the leader; Jerry'd have been lost without some one to give 'im orders. But nobody made out why Dodger, of all men, should have taken up with Jerry, when 'e might 'ave 'ad the pick of the battalion, pretty nigh.

Well, that year there was more unpleasantness even than usual up on the Northwest Frontier. There'd been trouble all

Summer an', bein' young an' inexperienced, we was all mad to go. So, when we did get our orders, well—we were happy.

Those beggars up there aren't what you'd term pious as a gen'ral rule, but when one o' their old Mullahs starts in preachin' a *jihad*—that's a holy war—against us they turn out in force, feelin' that they're layin' up for themselves treasures in 'eaven. Any'ow that was what happened in Tirah, where we spent a few very peaceful months, explorin' an' instructin' the in'abitants.

I couldn't describe the workin's of that campaign if I tried. It's always the same. The rank an' file knows—little o' what they're supposed to be doin' when once ball-cartridge is served out, almost as little as the gen'als. But I don't mind sayin' that it was an experience all the way through. The only part that matters now, 'owever, is after we got through the Sam-pagha and Arhanga Passes at the end of October an' were right in the middle of Tirah. We actually thought that the show—such as it was—was over; when, o' course, it was only just beginnin'. Same as two an' a half years later in South Africa.

Dargai, though unexpected, was simple an' straightforward. A stand-up fight like what we had expected. I'm talkin' about the second scrap—the Jocks got all the pickin's there—with guns an' whole Reg'tments, bugles an' pipes an' plenty o' casualties. We fancied after that little affair that we were pretty well acquainted with the Pathans. Like Dodger Mason; 'e says to me as one blighter kept just missin' us at about a thousand yards, "Why," says 'e, "the beggars can shoot!"

Yes, the Pathans made us think a bit, I tell you. I can stand a good deal, not bein' nervous, but it certainly gives you the shivers to 'ave a feller snipin' at you from God-knows-where an' you not able to spot 'im. And at night, too, when it's pitch-dark, an' you're out on picket, 'arf frozen on the top of a mountain with no greatcoat or blankets. Yes sir, most o' the time we were pretty 'elpless in Tirah. A — of a country it is, too; whackin' 'igh 'ills an' valleys, an' rivers an' precipices an' *nullahs* where our convoys got cut up reg'lar.

 NOW, let me see. It's about Dodger Mason I want to tell you first of all. Well, Dodger 'e liked bein' on active service as much as any one. 'E

never seemed to be tired and 'e never groused when we missed three meals runnin', or couldn't get back to camp after dark an' had to stay out on the hills. A good little man was Dodger! They don't breed 'is sort nowadays, or if they do, we don't get 'em in the Service, judgin' by the last batch o' recruits that have just joined!

And Jerry Bambridge, bein' exactly opposite, never stopped grumblin' for a single minute from mornin' to night. I remember 'im one evenin' sittin' in front of a fire be-'ind a heap of stones, talkin' an' talkin' about what he'd read in his old books.

"What 're we 'ere for?" 'e sez, "in this God-forsaken 'ole!" says 'e. "I've no quarrel with those Afridis"—the Afridis was the partic'ler crowd we were then fightin'. "I don't want to kill them. Why should I?" 'e says.

"They want to kill you, though, Jerry," says Dodger, "an' it's no good stoppin' to think why you're fightin' when some one's 'ittin' you on the nose, is it?" An' we all laughed.

And that was the way they'd go on. Dodger, 'e made a point of 'atin' the Pathans as if they was, every one of 'em, personal, private enemies of 'is. Jerry, 'e didn't mind one way or the other, 'cept that 'e was fed up with sleepin' out an' bein' hungry. He liked his comforts, did Jerry. I never knew any one quite so 'ard to get out of 'is blankets at reveille. An' the Flag wasn't by no means gentle in 'is method of wakin' a feller at four G. M., I tell you.

Well, one mornin' we left camp early, about three companies of the Reg'ment an' some Sikhs—a sim'lar number, p'r'aps more—with a crowd of mules; just an ord'nary foragin'-expedition. Sometimes nothin' would happen. Sometimes—well, it 'ud be like what you read in the newspapers: slight engagement, brush with the enemy, only one man killed. See! But if you 'appen to be the one man, it might just as well be a reg'lar Spion Kop or—or Mukden, as far as you're concerned.

II



DODGER MASON was chippin' Jerry Bambridge pretty free that day. And it was the first time I'd ever seen Jerry turn sulky with 'im an' answer back. Dodger bein' extra funny, 'e turned nasty all of a sudden. "For Heav-

en's sake!" says 'e in his heavy, stupid way, "for Heaven's sake, let's 'ave a bit less of your jaw! If you only knew 'ow sick everybody is of it, you'd not talk quite so much. Give it a rest!"

An' Dodger, 'e shuts up quick. Beyond makin' remarks about bein' friends an' such like, nobody thought any more about it, then.

Any'ow, we had a long day, but for a wonder saw never the sign of a Pathan. Dull for that reason it was, too, an' scorchin' hot. We foot-slogged miles an' miles. We searched all the 'ouses we came to—big places, built of mud an' timber, reg'lar forts—an' we gathered in all the fodder an' grain we could lay our 'ands on. Occasionally the Pathans 'ad buried the stuff an' we 'ad to dig for it, when we could.

We were workin' till well on in the afternoon an' then the pickets were drawn in an' we got orders to trek back to camp. But there again we 'ad not allowed for the Pathans. As soon as we moved off, the fun started. We was down in a windin' valley that twisted about in all directions, with rocks an' stones an' bushes an' pine-trees here an' there to break up all formation. And on the top of the hills an' on our flanks were the Pathans, firin' at us.

Mr. Bretherton, my subaltern, got knocked over, an' I ran across to see what was wrong.

"My thigh!" says 'e, and I saw the blood. He felt about careful, and I says, "'Ere, you three, come along 'ere!" an' bein' a lance-corporal, I tells Buffer Simpson and a couple of others to bear a hand.

You remember Buffer Simpson an' what 'appened to 'im at Neumayerspruit, don't you? Where we tried to 'oist the white flag, eh? Well, any'ow:

"What's that for?" says Mr. Bretherton, bindin' a scarf tight around 'is leg.

"To carry you, sir," says I.

"Oh, —!" says 'e. "Don't be an idiot, Hibbert," he says. "It's only a graze. Help me up!"

I did so, an' he goes on:

"Four to carry me, eh? An' one for the rifles, eh? An' then what comes next? Two or three more hit, and a crowd to aim at," says 'e. "Spread out!" 'e says, an' 'obbles off down the slope.

All the same he never played football again after that, and he was the best half the Reg'ment ever had, too.

The Afridis kept up a 'eavy fire, but we were pretty near camp by this time an' withdrawin' nicely, without any fuss.

A sergeant says to me, "We'll be clear of them in ten minutes," and I nodded.

"They're slackin' off, now," I says, as we went back another fifty yards.

It was much darker an' I wasn't sorry to see that there weren't quite so many flashes. Then we lay down again.

"At five 'undred—ready—present!" an' so on.

Then Jerry Bambridge ran up an' flopped down alongside of me. "Hullo!" says I, with my fingers in my pouch, "what are you doin'?"

He was quite white an' very shaky. "Here," says 'e. "'ave you seen Dodger anywhere?"

"No," says I, "I 'aven't seen 'im all the afternoon. An'," says I, "steady with that there bay'net o' yours. He's with 'is section over there, where you ought to be," I says.

"'E ain't," says Jerry, tremblin' all over.

"'E's nowhere. I've been 'untin' for 'im."

"Rot!" says I, thinkin' 'ard. "You'd better load or do somethin'. You ain't here for ornament."

He was on 'is knees, starin' back at the way we came, with 'is rifle on the ground.

"My God!" says 'e, "he's been left behind."

"Go to blazes!" says I. "'E's back in camp by now with one of the other companies."

An' then I forgot all about Jerry an' Dodger an' everything else but my own skin.

Some one yelled, "Look out, there!" an' the next moment the Pathans were rushing us, with their long knives and their "*Allahu Akbar!*" an' we were all jammed together any'ow. It only lasted three minutes or so, but it was quite long enough for me, I tell you! They didn't do much damage, poor beggars! Reinforcements arrived—the C. O. gettin' anxious—an' we reached camp with only five men wounded, not countin' Mr. Bretherton.

No sooner 'ad we began to settle down than it was reported that Dodger Mason was missin'. He might possibly be with another reg'ment, of course, but it wasn't in the least likely. If he didn't turn up soon—well, we knew 'ow it'd be.

I had cleaned my rifle an' was waitin' for somethin' to eat when up comes Jerry. He

stood there by the fire, sort o' dazed, lookin' from man to man, as if 'e didn't see any of us. Nobody says a word. Poor old Jerry!

Says 'e, after a while, "Dodger Mason's out in that valley." Nobody says a word. "We must go an' fetch 'im," 'e says. We shook our heads.

"We can't, Jerry," says Johnny Swayne. "We can't. If it'd be any use, we would," says 'e, but 'e didn't like to finish.

"Dodger Mason's out in that valley, you cowards!" says Jerry Bambridge, "an' we've got to fetch 'im."

We just shook our 'eads. We all knew we couldn't. It'd have needed a whole brigade, an' prob'ly even then there'd 'ave been—well, a massacre. Fancy goin' out after dark all the way up that windin', twistin' valley! The Afridis would 'ave wiped us out by whole companies in those *nullahs*.

Well, Jerry was pretty near crazy. He went to each of us, in turn; any one, in fact, who'd listen. He'd ha' tried the Gen'ral himself if 'e'd been allowed. He couldn't be got to see that we was right. Finally, we actually 'ad to stop 'im from dashin' off by 'imself—he wanted to. An' to quiet him down we promised that we'd go out first thing in the mornin', an' told 'im that Dodger 'd most probably be hidin' somewhere till daylight.

There was a good deal of night firin', I remember, in spite of Goorkha scouts prowlin' round; an'—not gettin' any sleep—I was glad when it was mornin'. Another foragin'-party was goin' out in the same direction as we'd been the day before, an' we went along with them.

Poor old Jerry! 'E took it badly. "If any accident 'as 'appened," says 'e, as we marched off, "I dunno what I shall do."

He looked as if 'e was sickenin' with somethin', fever or dysentery, rotten, just.

"But," says 'e, by way of comfort, "we're certain to find 'im all right, aren't we?" an' I nodded. "Yes," says Jerry, "an' it's me that'll be the first to find 'im, I know it will."



HE DID find him. And after all these years—that was in 1897—I wake up at times, shiverin', when I dream of it. Yes, sir; I do. Dodger was there, waitin' for us.

And it was Jerry that found him, after we'd been searchin' around among the rocks an' turnin's. He had run on ahead—not

listenin' to orders about keepin' together—an' I saw 'im lookin' down into a dry *spruit* bed—*nullah*, more properly speakin'—like a railway-cutting. He walked along slowly an' all of a sudden let out a screech an' chucked away 'is rifle. Next thing 'e'd disappeared over the edge. I followed, knowin' that we wouldn't 'ave to 'unt no more.

Jerry was kneelin' down with 'is arms round something—I made out bits of a khaki uniform—cryin' like a woman. It made me feel sick to 'ear 'im.

"What is it?" says I, my throat all thick and dry. "What is it?" says I, once again. An' then, sir, I couldn't wait no longer and I slid down the slope an' saw with my own eyes—what they'd done. I saw *that*—an' I'm alive now.

Oh, yes! 'E was dead all right. There was no doubt about that, no. Jerry crawled away, cryin'. I went all dizzy an' everything went misty. Poor old Dodger! It wasn't a man I was lookin' at—it 'ad never been alive. It couldn't 'ave. It was just a thing, dead; stretched on its back with what 'ad been its face—God 'elp us!—starin' up at the blue sky. They'd tortured 'im to death, they 'ad. An' don't ask what they'd done to 'im. Don't ask me what 'e was like. Cut 'im off, they 'ad—how an' when I don't know—an' tortured 'im to death.

I stood there in that *nullah*, 'elpless, with Jerry crouched in a heap, holdin' 'is 'ands in front of his eyes, an' the thing that 'ad been Dodger grinnin' up at me, showin' all his teeth from ear to ear. Then Jerry gets to 'is feet an' clutches my shoulders an' we looks at each other without speakin'.

He was bare-headed, sweatin' and an old man, I swear it, with the whites of 'is eyes all bloodshot. Twenty years 'e'd aged in ten minutes. He chokes an' gulps, an' after a while manages to say somethin'.

"What is it?" he says. "A man or what? What's the matter with 'is eyes?" says 'e, cryin'. "That's not Dodger." Silly he was. He kneels down again. "Hibbert," says 'e, "it is Dodger, isn't it? An' he's dead, eh?"

With that 'e stands up an' moves across to a flat-topped rock where 'e sits down an' begins to laugh an' laugh till some of the other chaps come along an' take charge o' things. An' that was the end of Dodger Mason.

Well, from that moment, Jerry Bambridge was mad. That was how I took it. Mad an' not responsible for what 'e did. I've seen fellers go queer, but never any one quite in the same way as Jerry did. Says 'e to me, when we were back in camp, "I always pay my debts," says 'e. "I won't fail in this." Later on 'e says, "We 'ad words only yesterday mornin'," 'e says, "an I told 'im not to talk quite so much an' that was the last time 'e spoke to me," says Jerry.

'E didn't eat, 'e didn't sleep, 'e didn't seem to know or care what was goin' on. 'E just shivered as if 'e was very cold. I didn't like the look of 'im partic'larly. He always 'ad been diff'rent to any other man in the Company, but after 'e found Dodger—God 'elp 'im!

He kept sayin', "When we get at 'em!" Only that. He repeated it over an' over again, with 'is eyes wide open, yet not seein' anything. Anything real, that is; 'cause the next evenin' about sunset 'e comes across to me.

"Hibbert," he says, "look there!" pointin' to the other side of the valley.

"Well?" says I.

"Don't you see 'im standin' there?" says 'e. Beyond a hairy, great Sikh sentry marchin' up an' down, there weren't nobody between us an' the hills opposite.

"There 'e is," says Jerry.

"Who?" says I.

"Why," says 'e, turnin' to me quickly, as if 'e thought I was makin' fun of 'im, "why, old Dodger, o' course! Can't you see 'im? You must be blind if you don't. He's standin' over there by himself. Let's go an' talk to 'im!" 'e says. I took 'im by the arm an' 'e went with me as quiet as anything.



A COUPLE of days after we found Dodger, we and a Sikh reg'ment an' some sappers an' miners were sent out on a reconnaissance to destroy some fortified towers which 'ad been troublin' our fellers, an' to do a bit o' map-makin' an' foragin' as well.

We had a lot o' marchin' and a lot o' waitin' around and a lot o' wonderin' what was goin' to 'appen; but besides that there was nothin' to do at all. That was because we—our company—was on the right flank, coverin' the workin'-parties. But late in the afternoon we did 'ave a bit of a fight to end up with.

Those Afridi 'ouses—well, they're most amazin'. You'll stand in a valley an' see the 'ills on both sides with a house stuck on the top of each one, and every 'ouse has a whackin' big tower with thick walls, loop-holed for purposes of shootin' from—blood-feuds an' that sort o' thing. Our chaps 'ad searched an' burnt three or four without any opposition, an' we were thinkin' that we'd soon be movin' back to camp. One house, however, was 'eld in force, an' the Pathans—tribe of Zakka Khels they was—opened a heavy fire. We couldn't see 'em from where we was posted, but we 'eard 'em all right an' wondered 'ow many there was. Then we gets sudden orders an' off we goes full tilt with fixed bay'nets an' very happy. See! We were to take 'em on the flank, from the blind side, where they didn't expect us.

Well, near the crest of the 'ill, the bugler with us sounded the "Charge," an' we sailed in. The troops in front 'ad ceased firin' an' the Zakka Khels were caught in a trap. There was a goat-path along a ridge at the back, but they didn't 'ave time to get away. See! We were on top o' them, before they knew what was up, bein' too busy firin' to think of any such bewilderin' strategy as a flank-attack. Soon's ever they heard us give tongue they tumbled out o' that house like wasps when you're smokin' out their nest. It wasn't much good, though. Some got away, but not many. Most of them died fightin'.

But, my God! Jerry Bambridge's face! I caught sight of 'im as we swung into them, an' a second later 'e was 'owlin' an' cursin', chasin' a tall, yellow-skinned Pathan round the 'ouse, with 'is bay'net waggin' a couple of inches from him. Playin' with 'im, like. I followed hard—in case. Jerry was goin' as quick as 'e could, just grinnin' an' shriekin' with 'appiness, like a fox-terrier after a rabbit, when old Andrews, a sergeant, come round the other side o' the 'ouse an' run the Pathan slap through the chest. The tip of 'is bay'net came out through 'is back, like a needle in a blister.

An' Jerry, 'e went ravin' mad. *Must*, 'e was.

Says 'e, "What the — did you do that for?" he says. "Why didn't you leave 'im alone, you fool? He was mine; I 'ad 'im first."

Old Andrews, 'e stood there with 'is mouth open, not able to say anything, while Jerry called him all the names 'e could think

of, an' the dead Pathan lay between 'em in his dirty yellor clothes with 'is knees bent.

Then Jerry rushes into the tower, but not another Pathan could 'e find fit to kill, not a one. There was no *Allahu Akbar* that time.

Last thing I saw, he trotted back to the feller Andrews 'ad killed an' stared at 'im with 'is bay'net playin' round 'is ribs. I believe 'e wanted to stick 'im, but I just spoke to 'im an' he came away at once.

Well, Jerry pretty near died with the disappointment. He'd been first at the 'ouse, 'e'd picked 'is man, who'd fired at 'im from about a yard off, an' then after chasin' him some one else 'ad done the killin'! He'd changed a whole lot about 'avin' no quarrel with Pathans!

If possible, that sent him madder than ever, an' the next day some one says to me, "Look at the knife what Jerry Bambridge 'as got 'old of! Ask 'im what he's goin' to do with it!"

'Strewth! He'd got hold of a *kukri* that 'e'd taken off a dead Goorkha. "What's that for, Jerry?" says I. "Oh! nothin'," says 'e, feelin' the blade. "It may come in useful!"

III



YOU know, sir, as I said, when we was in camp, the Afridis had a way of spendin' the nights snipin' at us. With a little luck, it meant that some one would be shot before mornin'. So, to avoid more casualties than we could 'elp, after the first week or so, the surroundin' 'ills was held by strong pickets in *sangars*—*schanzes* we used to call 'em in South Africa. It was cold work, an' we 'ated it. All Pathans are cunnin', but the Afridis are the pick o' the litter for devilment and wickedness. Night work is just heaven to them; a dark night, cloudy, a fire down below, a good rifle and a 'andful o' cartridges. Then aim at the fire an' trust to luck in the matter o' sights!

In 'is grass shoes on those rocks an' 'ills, the Pathan was more than a match for any one Tommy, single-anded. He'd 'ear our clumpin' big ammunition-boots 'arf a mile off, an' then if it weren't a 'Tini bullet, it'd be a three-foot knife in your guts. Same with the Sikhs, exactly. The only fellers that can touch 'em are the Goorkhas, which are brought up to the stalkin'-business, so to speak, with their mothers' milk.

Any'ow, we were out on the top of a mountain on picket, freezin' steady from the toes upward. Jerry was squattin' by me, an' says, 'e in a low voice, "I pay my debts, don't I?"

"I believe so."

"Ah!" says 'e, "but there's one debt I've not paid," he says. "Poor old Dodger's dead, an' what 'ave I done? Not a thing, not a — thing!"

After a bit 'e goes on. "Dodger's over there this minute," 'e says, touchin' me on the sleeve. "Just over there!" Speakin' as if it was the most natural thing in the world.

I didn't care for it altogether. "Chuck it, Jerry!" I says. "Try an' think of something else." Mind you, we was talkin' in whispers only, of course.

Later on in the night the Pathans start shootin' promiscuous. "I wonder," says Jerry, "'ow it'd be to go an' ask some of 'em if they 'appen to 'ave seen a pal o' mine. Dodger Mason's 'is name, an' I ain't seen 'im for I dunno when."

"If," says I, humorin' 'im an' worryin' what I ought to do, "if you were to ask 'em, they wouldn't tell you," I says. "Take it easy, an' don't think of Dodger. He's all right"

Jerry laughed, an' I leans against the stones of the *sangar* listenin' to the bangs, with cramp in my legs an' the 'orrors gen'rally.

'Bout 'arf an hour after this, he touches me again. "Dodger is out there," he says, "an' I'm off to ask 'im what's the matter an' why 'is eyes are so funny."

An' now this is the solemn truth, sir. Before I could move 'and or foot, before I could reckon up exactly what he meant—I was too cold to be quick, any'ow—Jerry Bambridge 'ad climbed over the breastwork an' cleared off into the darkness. Yes, sir, 'e did.

'Ow was it I didn't stop 'im? I couldn't. One word, an' he was off, an' not a man Jack of us could tell which way 'e'd gone even. To go after 'im would 'ave been lookin' for a needle in a 'aystack with most prob'ly a funeral or two thrown in. The subaltern in command wouldn't let us try neither, not bein' quite a blitherin' idiot.

"No," says 'e, "I'm not goin' to 'ave you fellers cut up, just because 'e chooses to be."

It was rotten work, 'aving to wait there, not able to do anything; an' the rest o' that

night seemed a week long till it began to gray an' get light.



I TELL you, sir, I didn't like to think very much o' what we should find. I'd seen Dodger, and I was afraid. But we 'ad to go out an' fetch in what was left of poor old Jerry Bambridge if possible. As soon as it could be managed—we got some more men up to 'elp, if I remember right—we started off an' the first thing we found was—what d' you think?—'is rifle, 'is helmet, greatcoat, belt an' things piled up in a neat little 'eap. Yes, sir, 'e'd left them be'ind.

We tracked 'im for a short way by a few footprints 'ere an' there, but afterward the ground would 'ave been too stony even for the Goorkhas. However, we'd made out enough to tell which way 'e'd gone, an' climbed into a small, narrer side valley—sort of ravine—strung out, keepin' in more or less touch with the *sangar* on top of the hill.

It was a 'ot mornin' by this time and I felt like it was all a waste o' time; that we'd never find Jerry, an' that it wasn't worth while botherin'. I tell you it was creepy down there in the midst o' those mountains an' precipices, not knowin' what would be waitin' for us around the next corner. Not that I was scared o' runnin' up against a Pathan; no, sir, that didn't worry me but—I'd seen Dodger.

I was with Andrews and a private—I forget 'is name now, but 'e got killed a month afterward in the Bara Valley, near Sher Khel. Well, we three kept on an' on, an' all at once we stops an' looks at each other.

"Wasn't that some one talkin'?" says the private, with 'is teeth clickin'. Of course it wasn't, it couldn't be! We crept on, slowly, by a clump o' pine-trees, an' then Andrews gripped my arm.

"See that!" says 'e.

Across our path, from the side, was drops o' blood, black an' dry, an' the mark o' foot-steps once more in the dust.

"That's Jerry!" says I, and I didn't like to say that we wouldn't be in time. No, but I knew it. We followed 'is tracks an' the drops o' blood, reg'lar trickle it was, slopped everywhere like as you spill water out of a bucket that's too full.

Then we all halts once more." As plain as I'm talkin' to you, sir, came a voice, high an' quaverin', like a bugler learnin' a new call.

"Well, Dodger, old chap," says the voice, "I 'ope you're satisfied, eh? I did my best, any'ow, an' a feller can't do no more, can 'e?" "—," says Andrews, "it's 'im, an' he's not dead."

We went on an' fetched up on the top of a rise. There in a holler *kloof*, slopin' up all the way round with stones an' rocks scattered about like in a chalk-pit on the downs, was Jerry Bambridge, talkin' feebly.

"Yes, Dodger," he says, "'ere they are. Eyes front when I'm speakin'! Stand at attention, can't you! 'Aven't you ever learnt 'ow to drill? Dress back there on the right. Who's that talkin' in the ranks? Sergeant, take that man's name, number three there, an' see that 'e 'as an hour's extra drill this afternoon."

Then 'e gives a husky sort o' laugh that changed to a fit o' coughin'.

None of us three spoke. If I live for a hundred years I'll never see anything like it. Never! And 'ow he done it, God only knows. It's one of them things that—well, 'e was mad o' course. He was 'arf sittin', 'arf lyin' on the ground with 'is shoulders against a rock. He was pretty far gone, his face was gray-white and all twisted an' wrinkled. His jacket was unbuttoned an' splashed with blood.

But it wasn't Jerry that we looked at. Opposite to 'im on the ground was—four heads starin' at 'im—four Pathans' heads with their teeth showin', an' the fear o' God on each face. About a couple o' yards from Jerry was the body belongin' to one of the 'eads. The other three weren't anywhere. An' Jerry 'eld in 'is 'and the *kukri* all smeared. An' he was laughin' at his four 'eads an' pretendin' that he was drillin' 'em on parade, damnin' 'em for not obeyin' him smart enough.

Yes, there was Jerry lyin' in that *kloof* in 'is dirty khaki on the stones, with the 'ills all round an' the cliff be'ind, an' the blue sky over'ead, with us three lookin' on.

Then 'e sees us.

"Hullo!" says 'e. "Come 'ere!"

We clambered down to him. "Don't you know me, Jerry?" I says. "Of course, I do," he says, very feebly. "I said I'd do it, and I did."

He laughed at the four heads again.

"Oh! you beauties, I 'ad you, 'adn't I?" he says. "You couldn't do anything against Jerry Bambridge, eh?" Then to me, "It was the last one that did it, Hibbert," he says, "or I'd 'ad more than four."

We'd seen enough to know that we couldn't do anything for 'im. 'E was long past that.

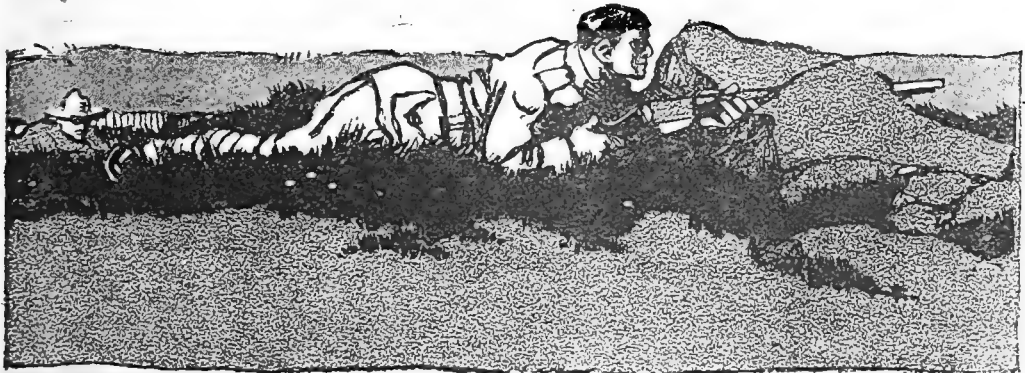
"Are you easy?" says I.

"Yes," says 'e. "It 'urts, but I'm 'appy. I pay my debts," says 'e, "always, an' now I'm square."

An' then 'e chokes an' coughs an' closes 'is eyes just as if all of a sudden 'e'd grown very tired. We waited a minute or so, but he never moved.

"He's dead," says old Andrews, stoopin' down. And he was. He'd a bullet through 'is lungs, an' the only thing that surprised me was that 'e'd held on as long as 'e 'ad.

Well, sir, that was 'ow Jerry Bambridge died, an' I was almost glad he was gone, knowin' what 'e was like. He'd done what no one else could 'ave done, and, as 'e said, 'e was 'appy. But from that day to this I've wondered how 'e got near those Pathans without their hearin' 'im. That's what I can't understand, nor nobody else. He was 'eavy on his feet, was Jerry Bambridge.



MEDAL OF HONOR MEN



Winners of the American Victoria Cross by Stephen Allen Reynolds

IN 1861 and 1862 our United States Congress passed acts looking to the decoration of certain men of our army and navy. In 1863, the sum of \$20,000 was appropriated for "the striking off of Medals of Honor" for such officers, non-commissioned officers and privates of the army, as most distinguish themselves in action.

The enlisted men and marines of the navy were also provided for, but not the commissioned officers! It requires a special act of Congress to decorate a Farragut, a Cushing, a Dewey or a Hobson; no matter how gallant the deed or how great the peril. Congress has never explained. Naval officers are reticent.

Since the dark days of our Civil War—the greatest and bloodiest conflict of modern times—3,267 Medals of Honor have been issued, of which, up to November 25, 1912, the men of the army have received 2,614. True, it is more commonly seen than the Victoria Cross of England—less than six hundred of the latter having been issued to date—but when one stops to think that nearly two millions of men have taken the field in our wars, it will be seen that but one soldier or sailor out of each six hundred or so has been decorated.

THE ARMY OF THE DEAD

NEITHER England nor Germany, nor any other Power, can boast (or deplore) bloodier battles or greater losses

than we of the United States. The 3rd Westphalen regiment at Mars la Tour lost 49.4 per cent. killed and wounded. 46.1 per cent. of the Garde Schützen were either killed or wounded by the French at Metz. 36.7 per cent. of the immortal Light Brigade were either killed or wounded at Balaklava. None of these regiments—selected from the heaviest losers upon European battlefields—lost 50 per cent.

In the Northern Army, during our Civil War—when more than two thousand Medals of Honor were won—not less than seventy regiments lost more than 50 per cent. killed and wounded *during a single engagement*. It has been figured that in more than one hundred and fifty regiments of the Federal Army a greater loss was sustained than that of the Light Brigade at Balaklava.

In the days of the great War of Secession, General Hancock dashed up to Colonel Colvill, in command of the 1st Minnesota Infantry. Pointing to the color-guard of a Confederate regiment of Wilcox's Division, the General gave a sharp command.

"I want those colors, Colonel," said he. "Advance your regiment at once and charge those lines!"

Fifteen minutes later, after some severe hand-to-hand fighting, they captured the coveted colors. But it was a costly operation, for not less than 81 per cent. of the brave Minnesotans lay dead and bleeding! The charge of the Light Brigade was a mere football-scramble compared with this rebel color-capturing affair. Tennyson should

have been told about it. Fifteen or twenty minutes after the Minnesota regiment had been shattered, the 111th New Yorkers lost more than 70 per cent. killed and wounded on almost the same spot!

So much for the sanguinary side of our Civil War—now for the medals.

When one stops to consider that a Medal of Honor can not be granted for "the brave discharge of duty in battle," nor to an officer for "leading his command in action, whatever measure of gallantry may have been shown in such leadership," but that the Medal must be deserved through some "conspicuous act of personal bravery or self-sacrifice above or beyond the mere call of duty," then—and then only—will one have any conception of what it means to earn one of these five-pointed stars.

With a few exceptions—these, due to inadvertence on the part of the War Department—the road to a Medal of Honor has been a rocky one, fraught with personal peril at every turn. Take, for instance, the case of Major Thorn, who deliberately took the risk of being blown to shreds in order that he might save the lives of some comrades.

MAJOR WALTER THORN—DAREDEVIL

DURING the latter part of 1864, General Benjamin F. Butler was cutting a canal called Dutch Gap across a bend in the James River. He wanted to avoid certain vessels and obstructions that the Rebels had sunk in the fairway to prevent the Federal gunboats from ascending the James and shelling Richmond. Realizing that if these obstructions were passed their capital would surely be taken, the Rebels concentrated their fire upon the canal-diggers, and hundreds of Northerners were thus killed and wounded.

Finally, early in January, 1865, after months of hard and perilous work, the cutting was nearly completed. Nothing but a bulkhead of earth and stone separated the two bodies of water which had been let in at either end of the cut. This bulkhead had been sapped and mined, and then charged with enough powder to have cleaned out Hell Gate in a hurry.

On the day appointed for the blowing up of this mammoth mine the Union troops were withdrawn to a safe distance, leaving a few men behind to light the fuse before

hastening away. Every precaution had been taken (supposedly) to avert the further and unnecessary loss of human life. But down under the bulkhead, stationed upon a shelving beach of the James River, were a score of non-commissioned officers and men. It was the river-picket, posted to keep a lookout toward the Southern lines. These men knew that the bulkhead was to be blown up; but no one had warned them just *when* the explosion was to occur. Some one had blundered.

A dozen fuses were lit, and the lighters ran toward the main body of troops. The Rebels, knowing that something was up, showered bullets upon the running men, and opened up a hot fire on the river-picket. The latter knew nothing of what was going on over their heads and behind them. It was their duty to remain at their posts until warned away or relieved.

Meanwhile, in the zone of comparative safety, a group of staff-officers were assembled. They were eagerly discussing the probable effects of the explosion, and every eye was turned upon the bulkhead.

Suddenly one of General Butler's staff-officers came galloping toward them.

"How about the river-picket?" he cried as he reined in his horse. "Has it been withdrawn?"

"No," some one groaned, "nobody thought of them."

"They'll all be killed!" was the rejoinder from the mounted officer. "It's too late to warn them now," he added.

Every cheek paled beneath the campaign grime—save one. It was no time for words. Immediate action was necessary. There were many brave officers present in that group—gallant leaders whose courage had been tested on scores of battlefields—but no one moved save one. Lieutenant Walter Thorn of the 116th Regiment of "Fighting Blacks" was the sole exception. He ran at top speed toward the bulkhead.

"Come back, you fool!" "It's too late!" "You'll be killed!" cried his fellow officers.

But young Thorn heeded none of them. Although hampered by two wounds received in November and December of the previous year, and knowing only too well that he was racing toward almost certain death, he hurried on, intent only upon gaining the bulkhead and warning his comrades.

As the fire ate its way along the lighted fuses Thorn scrambled to the top of the bulkhead, and shouted a warning to the picket below. This accomplished, he turned and fled for his life, preceded by the men of the picket, the latter unhandicapped by freshly healed wounds.

Barely fifty yards had been covered by the daredevil lieutenant when there came a sullen roar. The powder had detonated! The ground trembled. The sun was blotted out. For thousands of yards around the shattered bulkhead the air was full of flying earth and stones and mud. But the gallant lieutenant was unharmed.

Half blinded by the cloud of fine earth, half stunned by the shower of mud and stones, Thorn limped into the Union lines, and found himself a hero. A dozen hands were thrust out to grasp his own. Later, General Grant said to him: "Well done, Lieutenant!"

"It was as *deliberate* an act of self-sacrifice and valor as was ever performed in our own or any other army," said one of his superior officers in speaking of the deed.

Walter Thorn lived to become a Major; to take part in a night attack upon the enemy's works before Richmond, involving the loss of half of his regiment; to capture single-handed a Confederate major and flag; and to serve on the Mexican frontier under Sheridan in the days of the ill-starred Maximilian.

He richly deserved the Congressional Medal of Honor which the War Department bestowed upon him, and in later years was elected Commander of the Medal of Honor Legion, an association composed exclusively of men who themselves possess the five-pointed star.

At the present writing, Major Thorn is engaged in the practise of law. Brooklyn, of Greater New York, is proud of him.

A SOLDIER OF THE KAISER

IT IS a thankless task to attempt to single out notable examples of the winning of the Medal of Honor from among the thousands of cases where it has been awarded. In going over the official records of the War Department, one is fairly bewildered by the variety of gallant deeds which these Medal of Honor men performed. The mere perusal of the printed list of holders—in spite of its brief tabular statements—thrills

the pulse and kindles the spirit of the reader.

In strange places, in many foreign lands, under all sorts of conditions, our soldiers and sailors have won their stars. Most of the Medals were earned upon Southern battle-fields during our great civil conflict. The others have been won at sea, in the Far West, along our Mexican and Canadian borders, in Cuban jungles and Philippine paddy-fields, in far-off Samoa, Korea and China.

No braver man than Major M. R. W. Grebe ever sniffed the smoke of battle. After being enthusiastically praised by his commanding-officers, President Lincoln wrote him, in part, as follows:

You have my grateful personal acknowledgment of the almost inestimable service you have rendered the country. Your chivalry and daring described by the above generals and so appreciated by them and by myself, which always win the admiration of the world, are acts of absolute, indomitable courage, not needing to be emblazoned by the correspondent's pen, as they are written on the annals of the American history by your sword.

Yours very truly,

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

In July, 1864, Grebe was a captain serving upon the staff of Major-General McPherson. A German by birth, and a soldier by training, he had resigned from the German Army to espouse the cause of the Union.

Relying implicitly upon his aide-de-camp, General McPherson sent Grebe to deliver an important message to General Kilpatrick at Decatur, Ga. Grebe found the Union cavalry retreating in confusion. He delivered the message, and suggested a rally and a charge. Heading the charge in person, his mad riding and intrepid bearing inspired the Federal troops to such an extent that they followed him with a cheer, completely routing the enemy.

Grebe, followed only by his orderly, broke through the retreating ranks of the Confederates, with an eye to their color-bearer. Spurring his horse alongside of the galloping Confederate, Grebe grasped the flag with one hand while sabering the color-bearer with the other. He returned to the Union lines bearing the flag—and two bullets from the revolver of the Confederate.

General McPherson, noticing that the gallant German was bleeding profusely from his two wounds, ordered him to seek

medical aid. But Grebe refused to do this, and stuck to his saddle.

Shortly afterward General McPherson was shot, and Grebe again distinguished himself. He returned after a brief absence to a spot where he had just left the General, when to his surprise he saw his Commander's riderless horse come snorting out of a thicket. Captain Grebe surmised what had happened.

Alone, not knowing whether he would have to deal with a file of Confederates or a brigade of them, this soldier of fortune dashed into the thicket. The rest is better told by the ranking officer in command in his official report. Official reports stick closely to the facts.

"The fearless Captain ran up against the very rebels who had just killed General McPherson," General Frank P. Blair wrote the War Department. "The dead hero had been robbed of his field-glasses, belt, watch, pistol and papers. The struggle took place where the General had fallen. A Rebel on horseback made a dash at Captain Grebe, who shot him down. Two men on foot raised their guns at the Captain's head. Wagner, the plucky orderly, rode up just then and put a bullet into one, while the Captain himself split the other's hand with his saber. Most of the remaining Rebels fled, leaving the General's body in the possession of Captain Grebe, who on this occasion captured a corporal and numerous other prisoners."

A week later, after a series of repulses and countercharges, a trooper in one of the regiments in General Logan's Corps was discovered midway between the Union and Confederate lines. He was seen to be writhing in pain, held down by the body of his horse. Captain Grebe—alone, as usual—put the spurs to his horse and dashed toward the enemy's line, some seven hundred yards away. Fully a thousand Confederates fired at him; but he reached the side of the pinned-down trooper.

gallant and brave men themselves, ceased firing, and joined in the cheer which went up from thousands of throats.

In August of 1864, Captain Grebe voluntarily swam across the Flint River to deliver a message to a regiment of dismounted cavalry which had been cut off. Under a terrific fire of musketry, grape and canister, he gained the opposite bank, galloped across an open cotton-field, delivered the message and then led the dismounted troopers to a position of comparative safety!

Later that same day, Captain Grebe got into a hand-to-hand fight with a party of Confederate color-bearers. While attempting to wrench a flag out of the hand of one of them, a Confederate sergeant ran him through the left breast. Luckily the sword missed the heart of the gallant Captain. As for the Confederate who wounded him—he never lived to boast of it, for Wagner, the Captain's orderly, soon reached the spot and, with one mighty blow of his saber, avenged his Captain by cleaving the man in gray from crown to jaw.

At the close of the war, when about to be appointed Colonel, Captain Grebe was escorting a lady to a theater in St. Louis. Incensed at an insult to which he and the lady were subjected by another cavalry officer, he challenged the man, and a duel with .45-caliber revolvers at a distance of twelve paces ensued.

Grebe's opponent fell at the first exchange of shots, shot through the breast. He eventually recovered, but an outraged War Department cashiered both of them, as well as their seconds. Years later Congress investigated the matter, and directed that Captain Grebe not only be honorably discharged, but that he also be awarded a Medal of Honor, "not for any particular deed—in the case of this brave officer it were impossible to particularize—but for his general gallant behavior."

Thus, in after years, Congress endorsed the opinion of Abraham Lincoln.

WHEN THE REBELS CEASED FIRING

GREBE dismounted and, as coolly as if he were on parade, cut the man loose from his straps and stirrups, and dragged him from beneath the horse. This accomplished, he helped the injured man into his own saddle, mounted behind him, and galloped back to the Union lines. The Rebels,

THE TROOPER WHO SAID "— IF I DO!"

IN 1874, when Lieutenant King of the 5th Cavalry was detailed to survey a military reservation near Sunset Pass, Arizona, he and his party unexpectedly encountered a band of hostile Apaches. The Indians were well armed with rifles which our Government had issued to them

for hunting purposes. At the time of the encounter Lieutenant King was riding some distance in advance of his command, busy with his note-book and field-glasses. Strung out behind him, almost out of sight, were his troopers. Suddenly he came upon a band of the warriors, ambushed and waiting for him. It was a complete surprise. No hostile Indians were supposed to be within hundreds of miles. He turned aside in order to flank them, when they fired at him. Twice wounded, his eyes full of blood and a ball through his arm, the lieutenant fell from his horse. He struggled to his feet and attempted to run toward his men, but his foot caught in a mesquite root, and he fell heavily to the ground. The Apaches came dashing toward him.

King was an experienced Indian fighter. He knew that if he was captured alive he would be tortured to death. He cocked his revolver, and was on the point of shooting himself through the head, when Sergeant Taylor came galloping up. Unfortunately Taylor's horse ran away when its rider dismounted. But the plucky sergeant, pausing long enough to unsling his carbine and pick off a pair of the foremost warriors, lifted his officer and bore him to the rear. Taylor was a big, strapping fellow, but his burden began to tell on him.

Time after time he stopped long enough to shoot at his followers. Bullets flew thick and fast. Twice the lieutenant ordered Taylor to drop him and save himself.

"No, I'll be — if I do!" was the sergeant's insubordinate reply.

For a third of a mile the chase continued under the galling fire of the savages. Then came the sound of cheers and pounding hoofs. The main party came thundering up—and Taylor had won his Medal.

CORPORAL WEINERT AT WOUNDED KNEE

DURING the Indian trouble at Wounded Knee in the Winter of 1890—1891, Corporal Weinert of the First Artillery earned a Medal of Honor in rather spectacular fashion.

The heaviest part of the fighting was over when a band of Sioux took shelter under the bank of a ravine, and were using their rifles with deadly effect. They were in such a position that the mounted men of

the Seventh Cavalry could not very well get at them. Using their own judgment, without orders from a superior officer, Weinert and three men took up their station at the entrance of the ravine and started blazing away with their Hotchkiss.

The Indians concentrated their fire upon the four men. One man went back for ammunition, and failed to return. Weinert's Captain approached, and ordered the little party to fall back, but they affected not to hear the command, and pushed the gun *forward*! Lieutenant Hawthorne, of Weinert's Battery, was despatched to the scene to recall the men, but barely had he reached them when he fell, wounded.

"I'll make them pay for that!" shouted Weinert.

Ordering one of his men to carry the lieutenant back to the lines, Weinert and his single assistant advanced the gun fairly into the opening of the ravine, and proceeded to make things uncomfortable for the party of Sioux. The savages fired as fast as they could work the levers of their Winchesters; but, although they knocked a cartridge out of Weinert's hand, and fairly shot away the rim of one gun-wheel, neither of the brave men was hit.

Just as the gun commenced to grow too hot to work, and Weinert feared that he would be forced to drop back, three other guns came rolling up. The surviving Sioux were sent to the Happy Hunting Grounds in short order.

"I expected to be court-martialed," said Weinert later, in telling about what happened afterward. "Instead, old Allyn Capron, my Captain, came up to me, grasped me by the shoulders and said to the officers and men standing around: 'That's the kind of men I want in my battery!'"

THE TRENCHES OF SANTIAGO

OUR war with Spain was replete with soul-stirring incidents which won Medals of Honor for scores of participants. Notable indeed was the cable-cutting expedition at Cienfuegos, which resulted in twenty-five Medals of Honor for men of the *Nashville*, and twenty-four for the party detailed from the *Marblehead*.

Take an example. While our men were holding the Spanish trenches before Santiago, and the Spaniards were pouring a deadly, withering magazine fire into them,

a soldier of the 9th Infantry was struck in the chest. His wound was so painful that he became temporarily insane. In his agony he jumped out of the trench and rolled down the side of the embankment which faced the enemy.

The bullets were flying so thickly that it was dangerous even to expose one's hat above the trench. Yet Lieutenant Welborn sprang over the embankment, picked up the unconscious man and bore him back to a dressing-station. For this the Lieutenant was granted a Medal.

SERGEANT QUINN OF THE THIRTEENTH

ONE of the most spectacular incidents of the fight at San Juan Hill was the daring act of Sergeant Quinn of the 13th Infantry. On the Rough Riders' right, Quinn's regiment was doing its level best to hold the San Juan Ridge. It was shortly after the memorable charge.

A private soldier by the name of Wiles, serving with Company G of the 13th, lay flat on his belly and crawled out to a sheltered position some eighty or ninety yards in advance of the American lines. Wiles was an expert marksman, a sharpshooter who could hit an orange within one hundred and fifty yards. He was doing good work with his Krag, and the men on the ridge were admiring his coolness and skill when he was suddenly seen to drop his rifle and roll over. A Spanish marksman stationed in a near-by palm-tree had discovered him and gotten the range.

Quinn left cover and ran to the man's aid. Across an open space, a brigade of Spaniards blazing away at him, the brave Sergeant reached the shrubbery, only to find that Wiles was dead, having been shot through the left breast. There was very little that Quinn could do for him; but that little he did. He brought back the body, and the rifle.

Thousands of shots were fired at him as he staggered across the open space with his heavy burden; but, strange to say, he was not hit. Later in the day, while applying a temporary bandage to a wounded officer, Quinn had another remarkable escape. A Spanish shell burst close above him, tearing the bandage from his hand and wounding the officer for the second time.

Such is war.

A PAIR OF HEROES—BLACK AND WHITE

ON THE 20th of July, 1898, an act of singular bravery was performed on the U. S. S. *Iowa* by two of the "Black Squad." A manhole gasket had blown out in one of the boilers of Fireroom No. 2, and the room had immediately filled with live steam and boiling water, the latter squirting from the boiler under a pressure of one hundred and twenty pounds to the square inch.

Coppersmith P. B. Keefer, and Second-Class Fireman Penn—the latter a negro—who were stationed in an adjoining room, came rushing to the scene. Penn entered the compartment just in time to drag an injured coal-passer out of the boiling water, which was gradually deepening. The coal-passer, his feet scalded and his head injured, was borne to a place of safety, whereupon Penn returned to the scene of the accident.

Meanwhile Keefer had fought his way through the inferno until he reached the two inboard furnaces. Half blinded and badly scalded, he stuck to his post until Penn rejoined him. Live steam and scalding water were still gushing from the manhole when Penn returned. By means of some ash-buckets and planks a rude bridge was constructed over the boiling water which covered the fire-room floor-plates. Standing upon these planks the gallant pair hauled all four of the fires.

Thus these two brave men averted the imminent danger of a terrible explosion which would have cost us a battle-ship and hundreds of lives. It is, perhaps, quite needless to add, that both of these heroes received Congressional Medals of Honor.

THE HERO OF THE SIEGE OF PEKIN

MANY heroic deeds were performed by men of the Allied Troops during the siege of the legations at Pekin in 1900, but in all probability they were all outclassed by the performances of Joseph Mitchell, a gunner's mate of the United States Navy.

Mitchell had captured an old Chinese cannon. It was the only large gun in Pekin, and it was so old that no one dared fire it save Mitchell. Wedged in on three sides by the fanatics, who had erected imposing barricades, Mitchell found his heavy weapon in constant demand. Dragged

from place to place by volunteers from the Allied Forces, the old cannon responded nobly. Wherever Mitchell trained it and fired it, barricades disappeared as if by magic. Soon the old cannon became familiarly known as "The Old International," and that it was aptly named is evident from the fact that Mitchell loaded it with Chinese and German powder, Russian shell, and fired it by means of Japanese matches and fuses. But Mitchell had to work his gun single-handed. Every one else was afraid of it.

German, English and American artillery experts shook their heads when they examined the old gun, and kept well away from the vicinage when it was fired; but, according to the consensus of opinion later expressed, Mitchell and "The Old International" were the chief factors in saving the legations.

Mitchell also captured a Chinese flag, worked an Italian one-pounder until it became jammed and distinguished himself upon at least a dozen other occasions.

Between June twentieth, the day when Baron von Ketteler was murdered, and August seventeenth, fifty-eight Medals of Honor were earned in and around Peking by our gallant sailors and marines.

A FIRE IN THE POWDER-MAGAZINE

SPACE will not permit of anything approaching a complete account of the more spectacular deeds which won this five-pointed star of honor. The official War Department list, with its brief tabular statements of a line or two to a deed, consists of one hundred and fifty-four large pages. A mere list of the names of the men who have earned this Congressional distinction would cover page after page of ADVENTURE, and would no doubt prove to be dry reading.

It is, therefore, fitting that this article should be brought to a close with the narration of what is, in the opinion of the writer, the finest deed ever performed upon land or sea in the two hemispheres.

While the U. S. S. *Missouri* was at Pensacola, Florida, upon the thirteenth of April, 1904, an explosion occurred in one of the minor magazines—an explosion which cost the lives of five officers and twenty-eight men.

This explosion was in the twelfth powder-magazine. That part of the ship caught fire immediately following the catastrophe. The ship's company were thrown into confusion; but amid the flames and smoke and the groans of the burned and wounded one man kept his head. It was Mons Monsson, an enlisted man.

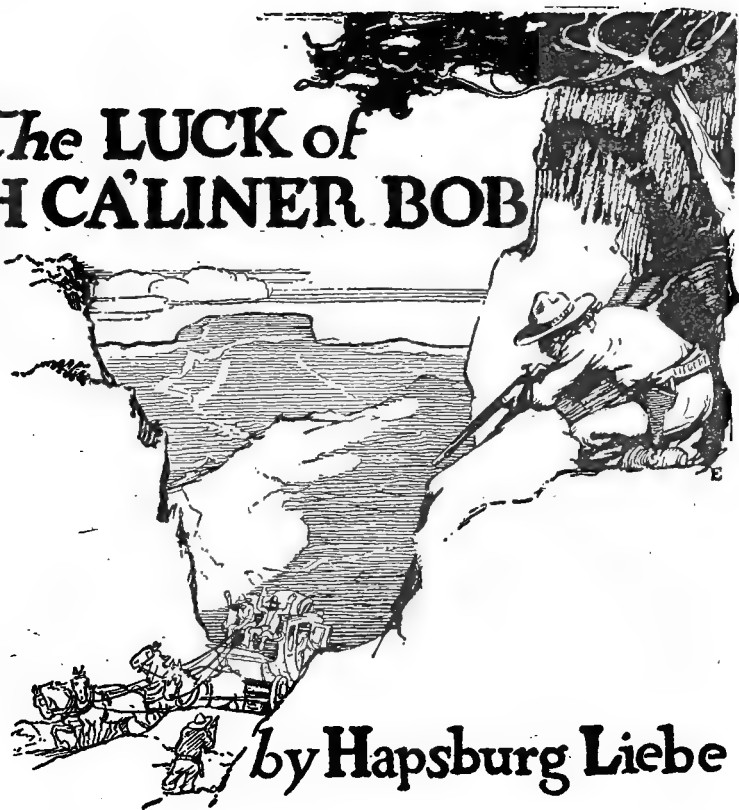
Realizing that if the flames reached the great mass of powder and ammunition stored in an adjoining magazine—a larger one—the ship would be destroyed, he acted quickly. He sprang for the open scuttle of the magazine, bearing two buckets of water. Even as he leaped he saw some flaming canvas and blazing wood upon the steel floor of the magazine.

Once within, he closed the door behind him, knowing that with the air supply cut off he stood a better chance of putting out the flames. Alone, single-handed, he battled with the flaming material, husbanding his scanty supply of water, using his hands to place it where it was most needed. Eventually a hose was passed in to him, and the blaze extinguished.

Thus this hero of heroes saved the ship and the crew. He had wagered his own life by voluntarily entering a blazing powder-magazine and then closing the scuttle behind him! Is there, in the annals of heroism, any act which equals this?



The LUCK of NAWTH CA'LINER BOB



by Hapsburg Liebe

BOB ANGEL came from Nawth Ca'liner. He had had the Western fever for so long that nothin' would do him but to have a try at realizin' his dreams. So he come out here and the first crack spent all the coin he had but ten dollars for a brand-new Winchester rifle and a calico hoss that was as wicked as the devil hisself. Then he managed to ride his hideful o' pizen out to the Circle-Y Ranch, where he applied for a job as cowman.

Well, the Circle-Y boss winked at hisself and handed the little feller a job and no questions asked, at the same time tellin' the boys to take charge o' the tenderfoot and break him in. Now the Circle-Y outfit was the toughest bunch this side o' purgatory. One of 'em, a big hulk of a man, took little Bob's rifle from him; then little Bob handed him a punch in the nose that broke that smellin' arrangement, and, durin' the same second, handed the big duffer one in the digestive apparatus that doubled him up on the ground. When the rest o' the outfit woke up, little Angel was a-strad-

dle o' the calico and makin' for the tall timbers—so to speak.

When Angel had reached the stage-road that runs from Fireplace to Tenville, the calico got contrary and threwed him, after which the animile disappeared like a streak o' spotted lightnin' in a direction which Bob didn't want to take, which was toward Tenville, the former home o' the calico. So there was little Bob, settin' flat in the dust of a road in a strange country, his hoss and his rifle gone, and only ten dollars in his pocket.

As he trudged up the dusty road, a greaser overtook him—a greaser mounted on a passin' fine young saddle-hoss, which was in a white sweat from hard runnin'.

"Señor," says the Mex, "this hoss for fifteen pesos. Cheap, señor!"

The fact of it was that the Mex had stole the hoss from the Circle-Y, and was bein' pursued pretty clost.

"I'll give you ten dollars," says little Bob. "I hain't got but jest ten dollars atween me and the grave."

"Very well, señor."

And the hoss changes hands.

Angel's spirits picked up rapid at the thought o' doublin' several times on his ten. He mounts the animile's bare back, clucks and twitches at the rope bridle, and starts toward Fireplace.

Well, little Bob hadn't gone half a mile when he heard the sound o' hoofs behind him. He turned, and seen a cloud o' dust comin' rapid, and at the head of it a passel o' the Circle-Y boys. At sight of him the cowmen sets up a wild howl and begins to shoot off their .45's, sendin' bullets whinin' all around little Angel. The boy sees that it's mighty onhealthy for him in that immediate vicinity, and kicks his heels into the sides o' his mount as hard as he can. The hoss, havin' some fine mettle in him, leaps forrards and in a minute is keepin' pace with the Circle-Y outfit.

At the first bend in the road Angel jumps off, slaps the animile with his hat and sends it on down the road in a gallop. Then he hides hisself in the scrub and watches the cowmen pass, most of 'em reloadin' as they went.

"Well, if this here hain't the luck of a yaller dog!" says little Bob to hisself, in his drawlin' mountaineer talk. "I'll bet," he goes on, suddenly realizin' what was what, "that that thar dark-skinned person had stole that thar hoss! But a feller's luck is bound to change, sometime!"

 AFTER the coast was good and clear Angel gets out into the road and hoofs it to Fireplace, arrivin' about half an hour after dark—which was fortunate for him, as there was several o' the Circle-Y boys in town. The first place Bob makes for is the sheriff's hang-out, where he means to explain his predicament.

Sheriff Buck Frazier was big and rough and sunburned to a sandstone-brown, his jaw had a fightin' squareness to it, and his mustaches was very long and almost the color of his hide. He was settin' cross-legged in his two-by-four office when Bob Angel looms up on the horizon. He bawls out a' invite to enter, which Angel takes advantage of immediate. Angel didn't pull off his hat. He pushes back the front rim and looks Buck in the eye as he tells about his troubles.

"Well," says the sheriff, stuffin' a cob-pipe of his own manufacture with cut-plug, "I guess you're givin' me a straight tale,

all right. I can gen'rally tell the difference. I'll promise you that the Circle-Y bunch won't bother you any more. I'll see to that. You must be some hongry, kid; come with me."

Buck Frazier, the big-hearted man, took little Bob to a restaurant and fed him—and Bob eat like a starvin' man. Then they went back to the office, with Bob pickin' his teeth with a safety-pin and tellin' hisself that he knowed his luck was bound to change.

The sheriff had no more than lit his smoky lamp and kicked out a powder-keg for Bob to set on when the door opens and the owner of the Hartsville stage breaks in, a big, red-faced feller named Jim Terrell.

"Look here, Buck," he blares, "that there gunman Bluesteel has held us up again! It wasn't ten miles from here! It sure looks like you could do somethin' to stop it. This is the third time, Buck Frazier, that it's been done right under your nose. Why, it'll soon be that nobody won't have any faith in you. Buck, I want you to put that ornery gunman out o' business!"

Frazier straightens in his chair, and his eyes becomes narrowed and serious.

"Well, I'll be durned!" says he. "Again! Now that beats——"

"I've heard you go over all that before," interrupts the stage-owner, seemin' like he was so mad that his breath would wilt chaparral. "I've heard you make promises and threats before. I want to see you do somethin'. If you can't catch him, why don't you give your job to somebody who can? What're you doin' wearin' a sheriff's star without earnin' the right?"

This made Frazier as mad as a wet hen. Frazier wasn't a person that jest anybody could lambaste to suit jest any fancy.

"Hold on there!" he says, jerkin' his head down and sidewise at the same time. "I didn't ask for this low-down job. You people put it on me, and dared me not to take it—hinted at the white feather when I said I didn't want it. If I ain't givin' satisfaction, put in somebody else. As far as catchin' Bluesteel is concerned, ain't I done all a man could do? I've ha'nted the road time after time. I've rode the stage time after time. I've offered a reward o' five hundred dollars, which I'll make up if the State won't. And I want you to understand that it's some dangerous job to hunt

a man who can shoot like this lone bandit who calls hisself 'Bluesteel.' "

"The old story—the old story!" whines Terrell. "Talk don't go. Catch the outlaw, Buck."

With that the stage-owner slips out o' the office, leavin' Buck Frazier still lookin' mad.

"What about this here Bluesteel feller?" inquires little Bob Angel, when Terrell had gone.

"What about him?" growls Frazier. "Nothin', only he's as cunnin' as a fox, as big as a giant, and bullet-proof, and his two guns can outshoot a pair o' Gatlin's. He's held up everything in this country, and nobody ever put a hand on him. Always wears buckskin chaps with Mexican adornments, high and peaked hat, a blue handkerchief over his face and another one around his neck. His eyes is as blue as ink, and so is his guns, which named him Bluesteel. I'm about to lose my standin' in the community because I don't seem to be able to catch him—even though I didn't ask for the job of sheriff."

"Lend me a gun," says little Angel, as ca'm as if he wanted to go out and shoot jack-rabbits. "You've been mighty white to me, and maybe I can sort o' pay you back."

Frazier slaps his thighs with both hands and smiles at Angel's big talk.

"Why, you little cuss," he says, "Bluesteel would eat you up alive! He'd laugh at you, kid!"

"That's all right about him a-laughin'," replies Bob, with his black eyes shinin' like metal. "You gimme a gun—a rifle, mind you, Mr. Sheriff. I've been raised up whar a man wasn't no 'count if he couldn't shoot a squirrel's eye out the first crack. I could do that afore I was knee-high to a goose. I can hit anything as far as I can see it—and I can see a gnat wink half a mile off."

The sheriff's smile broadens, and his face shows his admiration for the big spirit that is in the little man from Nawth Ca'liner. He ain't got the least idee that Angel can capture the gunman; but he decides to let Bob have his way. He reaches into a corner and hands over a Winchester to Bob.

"I'll be durned if I don't do it, kid," says he, humorin' like. "Shoots best with a fine sight and a hair to the left."

"I'll find out how she shoots," draws the mountaineer, in tones as big as a' ex-presi-

dent's. "Advance me a couple o' dollars, and gimme over that thar ca'tridge-belt and that thar canteen thar."

Buck Frazier winked at hisself as the little feller stepped out into the night. It was funny to think of a boy like Angel goin' out to tackle and round up the slipperiest outlaw the country had ever had. Bluesteel had never killed anybody, but he had punctured lots o' hat-tops for sport, and his laughin' at everybody was hard to take.



WELL, for a week Angel ha'nted the road between Fireplace and Hartsville, choosin' the most likely-lookin' spots for a hold-up; but not hair nor hide o' Bluesteel did he see.

So the little feller from Nawth Ca'liner found hisself out o' money and grub. His confidence in his luck was changin'—and there was his braggin' to his friend the sheriff to be took into account. It was sure a high stump to be up. He was ashamed to go back to Fireplace on the hunt o' more grub. He was so weak with starvin' hisself that he didn't feel that he could walk to Hartsville. But fin'ly he said to hisself that he could face the sheriff if he jest had three dollars to pay him back.

Then he gets homesick for his own big blue mountains back in Nawth Ca'liner, and with this he gets sort o' desp'rate. So, after half a day o' thinkin' on the matter, he decides to hold up the Hartsville stage in the name o' the much-dreaded Bluesteel; he tells hisself that he won't take but jest enough money to pay the sheriff back and pay his railroad-fare home. He was a fair sort of a little cuss, Bob Angel was, and no mistake. The risk o' bein' shot, he figgered, was worth what money he needed.

Bob ties the blue handkerchief he'd found over his face, not takin' into consideration the fact that Bluesteel was a heap bigger than him, and creeps down to the road where he lays in wait for the stage. The place he chose as the scene o' the hold-up was between two close-lyin' hills, where the vehicle barely had room to pass. He was hid in a crevice in the rocks about wheel-high on the right hand side o' the road. So when the stage comes swingin' and rockin' along with its four hosses lathered and snortin', he pokes his Winchester out at the man on top and yells in a voice that was half starved and slim,

"Hands up to Bluesteel!"

At the familiar name the driver yanked in on his reins, and the old coach come to a quick dead halt. The driver then elevated his hands, and Angel turned the frownin' gun-barrel towards the folks inside.

"Drap out o' thar!" he orders in his slim voice. "Line up to Bluesteel!"

Well, Sheriff Buck Frazier and Jim Terrell was along, and when their hands was raised they held revolvers in 'em. Little Angel's bad luck had kept right on. He had held up the stage at the wrong time. Jim Terrell would have shot Bob if the sheriff hadn't recognized his voice.

"Hold!" says Buck, and grabbed Terrell's gun.

"You fool!" bawls Terrell, his eyes snap-pin' fire. "You fool—do you want to help rob the stage? Le' my gun alone——"

"Dry up!" says Buck, and forces Jim back to his seat. "I'm runnin' this show at present." Then he turns to Angel:

"Say," says he, "ain't you afraid you'll pull the trigger without intendin' to do so? Put that there dangerous thing down."

Angel started like a man in a dream. He'd been so surprised to see Buck Frazier that he had kept his gun cocked and on him after he knowed who he was. He dropped the Winchester, and fin'ly set it against the rocks at his side. Then he pulled down the blue handkerchief, and stepped forrards, his two wrists held out for the handcuffs.

"It's all off with me," he says, pitiful-like. "My luck won't change. Here I am—take me and do what you durn please with me."

But Buck Frazier didn't make a move toward the irons that hung at his belt. He stood there sizin' the boy up, from top to toe, and a sort o' sympathetic smile broke out at the corners of his mouth.

"Kid," says he, after a minute o' watchin' Bob with one eye and the frownin' Jim Terrell with the other, "Kid, what made you do it?"

Angel promptly opened up his heart and told why he had done it in a straightfor'ard way that carried conviction with it. At least Buck Frazier didn't doubt it.

"Well, kid," says the sheriff, "you ain't goin' to get any irons from me. Come along to Hartsville with us, and get yourself a new supply o' grub, so you can hunt

for Bluesteel some more. You're bound to get him if you try long enough. Your luck will change, kid."

"I'll get the outlaw or spend the rest o' my life a-tryin'," says Bob, "after this."

Jim Terrell had straightened up like he had had a ramrod slipped in his spinal column. Oh, he was mad!

"Buck," he says, "surely you don't mean that! Why, that man there was caught red-handed!"

"He ain't Bluesteel," retorts the sheriff. "He told us the truth. As long as I'm the boss officer o' this community, I'm goin' to run matters to suit *me*. You jest put somebody in my place, now, or else keep your jaw tight. A law that ain't got no mercy in it, Jim Terrell, ain't worth a cuss."



I NEVER did know whether he really had come to have some faith in the little feller from Nawth Ca'-liner, or whether he was jest sayin' it to please Bob.

So little Angel goes on to Hartsville and lays in a good supply o' hill rations, and again goes into the hills to watch for Bluesteel. You see, he owed the sheriff a big debt now, and he was fully determined to capture the outlaw if it was possible.

"I'll jest take enough o' that thar reward," he says to himself, in his soft, drawlin' mountaineer talk, "to pay my way home—and I'll also give the sheriff the glory o' makin' the catch, so he can git back his standin' in his community."

Now Bluesteel had a way o' findin' out things, jest as most outlaws has. And Bluesteel had found out that the little tarheel was on his trail. He knowed that them there mountaineers could outshoot him at a distance, and he regarded Bob as the most dangerous enemy he had. So when next the outlaw plans a stage-robbery he takes the pains to find out jest where Angel is hangin' out at.

He found him settin' like a wooden figger in the br'illin' sun, high up among the rocks on a big pinnacle hill, from which p'int he could see the dirty-white ribbon of a stage-road for some two miles, all of it a favorite spot for the hold-up artist. Bluesteel then creeps back from the brow o' the neighborin' hill, smiles to hisself and makes for a place a mile beyant the spot where Angel's vigilant eyes loses track o' the road.

And because little Bob had seen the peaked hat and the upper part of a blue shirt out o' the tail of his keen, black eyes, he picks up his rifle and slips along behind the big feller, trailin' him like a snake, sometimes crawlin', sometimes stoopin', sometimes in sight of him, sometimes out. And when Bluesteel had got to the place where he meant to hold up the Hartsville stage, which was about due, Bob Angel was layin' flat on the ground up on the hillside some two hundred yards above him.

Angel watched the outlaw tie a wide, blue handkerchief over his face and look to his two blued guns; he seen Bluesteel step out into the road every minute and look for the stage. And every time he had a chance, Bob would slide down the hill on his stomach for a few feet, from one clump o' scrub to another. So when the stage come rattlin' along, Bob was within seventy-five yards o' the bad man.

Angel's heart was beatin' rapid when he seen the old vehicle and its four hosses come swingin' round a bend in the road. He cocked his rifle and let the hammer down to test the trigger. Then he cocked it and let it stay cocked. Then he stuck the butt against his shoulder, pulled his hat-rim down to shade his eyes and took a sight. The sun blazed on the bead, and he moved back a foot in order to get the muzzle in the shade o' the scrub that sheltered him from the outlaw's gaze.

Bluesteel handed out the customary order in regards to elevatin' hands, and the occupants stepped from the stage and lined up to be separated from their valuables. All of 'em was white in the face from fear, and their hands was all as high as they could get 'em without tiptoein'. Bluesteel kept watch over every person there, and saw that nobody went for a gun-handle. But he needn't have been so all-fired partickler: the good people o' the stage had all heard about him, and they wasn't very apt to make a bad move.

Well, the hold-up man took what money and jewelry that was available, and then give the driver a sign that meant to get a move on and be mighty quick about it. The driver took up his lines and cracked his whip over the heads of his wheel-hosses, and the old stage rattled on toward Fire-place.

As soon as the vehicle was out o' the

way, when there was no danger o' hittin' anybody except the outlaw, little Bob Angel raised a bit, took a dead square aim between the bad man's shoulders and yelled,

"Hands up to Nawth Ca'liner Bob, Mister Bluesteel! Try any tricks with me," he says, in a voice that was as cold and as hard as ice, "and I'll kill you as dead as hell'd want you!"



BLUESTEEL'S hand had gone—not to the butts of his holstered guns—but skyward. He turned and faced the dangerous clump o' scrub.

"Well," says he, "you've got the drop. Come on and get me."

Angel gets up and starts, but with all proper attention to his rifle.

But here he found himself in a difficulty. Between him and the outlaw there was a little ridge on the hillside, with a considerable dip between him and it. Also there was a dip between the ridge and the bandit. Neither one could approach the other without gettin' out o' the other's sight. Before Angel knowed what was what, he could jest barely see the head o' Bluesteel, who still stood with his hands up beside the road. Bob found out his mistake too late—for Bluesteel suddenly ducked and dived into the scrub at his left like a jack-rabbit!

Angel cursed as big as the biggest man in the world at the thought of his man gettin' away. He run to the top o' the ridge and stood there for several minutes, his eyes watchin' in every direction, his rifle ready to bring to his shoulder. And then—

And then he seen Bluesteel runnin' up a hillside fully three hundred yards away. He raised his rifle, aimed a little high on account o' the distance and slightly to the left, and pulled the trigger; after which he dodged from the powder-smoke to see what he'd done.

He seen Bluesteel crumple, with his hands clawin' at the air, and then roll several feet down among the rocks and the scrub!

"I got him! I'll be durned if I didn't!" hollers little Angel.

Then he sets out for the spot at which lays the bandit. But he wasn't so enthusiastic about it that he'd forgot to pump another ca'tridge into the barrel of his gun. In fact, he'd done that before the echoes

had died out. Nor did he get out o' sight o' the outlaw while on the way to him.

When he had reached the limp and seemin'ly lifeless figger layin' against a clump o' mesquite, he seen that the wide, blue handkerchief had come down from its face, either by accident or intention. He seen also that a pair o' pain-filled blue eyes was a-watchin' him mighty clost. And then he seen somethin' that mighty nigh took his breath. He dropped his gun to the ground, and got down on his knees beside the bandit, his hands writhin' and his face troubled.

The bandit was Buck Frazier—Buck, as hadn't wanted the sheriff's job.

"Kid," he says, "your luck has changed. No, don't blubber. You didn't hit me. The bullet sung so clost to my ear that I knowed the next one would do the job, and I played off on you. I thought maybe you'd get out o' sight as you come to me and then I meant to get up and run."

"Honest, kid, I was a hold-up artist more to satisfy my red blood than for any other

reason. But I meant to quit, and I'll swear it, kid, after this one last job. And now," he says, settin' up, "we're goin' over into a valley not far from here and have a funeral."

When they'd reached the place where the sheriff's hoss was hid in the scrub, Buck pulled off his peaked hat, his chaps, his blue shirt, handkerchiefs and guns, and dug a hole and buried 'em.

"There, kid," says he, mighty solemn, "is the earthly remains of the outlaw knowed as Bluesteel."

They went straight to the Black Fox Saloon, which was well filled with miners and cowmen—and Jim Terrell. Buck picked little Angel up, set him on the bar, on his feet, and turned to the wonderin' crowd.

"Boys," says he, "I want to interduce to you the man who has this day killed and buried Bluesteel!"

So Bob reckoned he wouldn't pull out for Nawth Ca'liner.



THE PERFECT CRIME

by Hugh Pendexter

DACKETT knew the long-looked-for opportunity confronted him. Fully conscious he possessed a criminal mind and that he had thus far observed the outward forms of rectitude solely because of his fear for results, he was now determined to push his fortune. Only by the merest chance had he recognized Plimmer in the street—Plimmer, the absconding cashier of the Wellsville National Bank, for whom the detectives and police of two continents were looking.

The very fact that he recognized Plimmer while the press of the country was placing the embezzler in Central America, Rio de Janeiro and various European cities augured well for his sudden resolve. He would rob Plimmer! For years he had sought to find a series of circumstances of which larcenous advantage could be taken without detection. In each instance caution had held him back. There was always something, some little fact, he could not see clear to eliminate. Now, the conditions were ideal.

Here was a thief, undoubtedly with fifty thousand dollars on his person which he was unable to spend and afraid to hide, and only one man knew of his presence in the city. Up to a certain point, was the plotter's quick conclusion, Dackett would be working hand in glove with the authorities, or until the funds Plimmer had stolen were recovered. He would not even be outside the law until that achievement was accomplished. Then would come the forking of the ways: he could return the money to the bank and receive the substantial reward, or —

"All or nothing," he grimly muttered as he entered an obscure family hotel on the heels of Plimmer. He had no fear of being recognized, as the cashier had seen him last a beardless youth. Now, he was gray and heavily bearded. And he did not hesitate to approach the desk and stand behind his proposed victim while waiting to register.

Plimmer signed as "Richard Bridges, Detroit," and was given room 566.

"Front!" called the clerk as Plimmer and his hand luggage disappeared within an elevator. "Take this gentleman up to 568. Any baggage coming, Mr. Wells?" For Dackett on the spur of the moment had used the first syllable of Plimmer's home town in improvising a name.

Regretting he had not chosen some other *alias*, Dackett shook his head and paid for the room. The lucky chance which gave him a room next to Plimmer's should have pleased him highly, but his thoughts persisted in brooding over the register. Through the stupidity of fate he might find himself looked upon with suspicion because of the *alias*. Some police official, clumsily blundering about for a clue, might associate the assumed name with that of Wellsville and lay him by the heels long enough to permit Plimmer to escape.

By the time he reached his room, however, his mind was made up, if not entirely composed. He had acted rashly in not arranging for his *alias* before approaching the desk. He had written the name subconsciously. He must take great care not to act on an impulse a second time. It was because of such thoughtless activities that men trapped themselves. He had always held that men were not detected in crime till they had exposed themselves. Therefore his first move was to examine the task thoroughly, with the cold eye of logic.

To arrange his data more completely he drew out the table and writing material and wrote rapidly:

Positive facts: A thief will not make an outcry when robbed of stolen goods. Plimmer's prime object is to escape the country. If robbed he will remain quiescent and continue his efforts to escape. Should I now enter his room and deprive him of his loot by force he would sound no alarm. He has not recognized me, and will not. Once I get the money and win clear of the hotel there is no chance of my identity being detected. Ergo, I must act quickly.

He reread his notes thoughtfully and frowned as the negative side of the situation obtruded itself and his mind took up the old trick of presenting obstacles which his logic could not surmount. True to his system of scanning every problem on both sides he again wrote:

Negatives: Plimmer will not escape the country. He is sure to be caught. Every steamboat-line is watched. He is bottled up tight.

His only chance of avoiding capture for a while is to remain right here in the city. Even then his capture is but a question of time. But he will not remain here; he is sure to try to bolt.

When arrested he will declare he was robbed by a man with a heavy beard and will describe me. He may be disbelieved at first, but when he persists in his assertion, although offered leniency providing he return the money, an inquiry will be made.

The clerk will remember a man with a beard had the room next to Plimmer's. Plimmer's arrest will focus the clerk's mind on everything pertaining to room 566 and this will naturally suggest 568. The name of Wells will be investigated. It will transpire that no such man lives in Troy, N. Y.

Here he paused long enough to condemn, "What a fool I was not to have signed myself plain Smith, New York City!"

Frowning at his summary he slowly added:

Once it is known Plimmer hasn't the money a keen watch will be kept for some one attempting to pass fifty one-thousand-dollar certificates. In order to get rid of them I must travel from one large center to another, thus piling up proof against myself, while every change of base doubles the chance of detection.

Contra: It would be impossible to remain long enough in one large center to change the certificates into smaller bills or bank-deposits. Plimmer is sure to be caught.

When he is, and explains how he was robbed, I must lie low for a long time before attempting to use what remains of the loot while what already may have been used might be traced back to me.

Fifty one-thousand-dollar certificates make an awkward bundle.

This conclusion set him to chewing his lips savagely. It had seemed extremely

simple till now. But he knew that large sums of money are traced with a skill that impresses the average layman as being uncanny. From long study of big thefts he knew all the talk about money being beyond identification was rot. What if he succeeded in changing the form of his loot and was ultimately suspected and questioned? How could he explain the source of a fifty-thousand-dollar bank-account? And Plimmer was sure to be trapped.

This recurring conviction set him to believing the police were hot on the trail, that the detective guardians of the American Bankers' Protective Association were about to land their man, that all the publicity about the fugitive being abroad was purposed to lull him into a false sense of security and induce him to break cover and betray himself.

He believed this was the true situation and that he must act quickly, would he profit by the cashier's crime. Lighting a match he carefully burned his notes and resumed his attitude of pondering.



"THERE is some way out of it," he mused. "There can be no condition of circumstances which human logic can not encompass and conquer. For every negative in the situation there is a positive. Now let's see: Suppose Plimmer escapes the country after I get the money. Plimmer will die sometime; then he'll confess—they all do. In the meanwhile I have changed the money into other assets. Back sweep the authorities to this city, to this hotel, to this room, and pick up my trail.

"They'll satisfy themselves that the man in 568 never lived in Troy. I am well-known in my home town. Business acquaintances may remember I suddenly became possessed of considerable money at about this time. Others will remember that I used to know Plimmer, for I've mentioned the fact since he absconded and when I little expected ever to see him. At last, by some infernal chance, suspicion is directed against me. I can't account for my sudden increase in fortune. Under the most favorable circumstances such a dénouement is liable to take place. No, my plans must preclude any hypothesis of guilt. There is some way that absolutely defies detection. And Plimmer will certainly be nabbed before he quits the city. Now let me think; let me think."

After several minutes of empty endeavor Dackett rose and stole to a door that connected his room with 566. He had expected to find the key in the lock, or something hung over the keyhole to prevent spying. Plimmer was unsophisticated and had taken no precautions. For a count of twenty Dackett kneeled, straining his eye but seeing nothing except a table and a chair. He could hear Plimmer moving about and was at last rewarded by the embezzler entering the field of vision and placing his suit-case upon the table. Then he sat down before it.

Dackett trembled with an awful lust as he next beheld the cashier holding up the package of stolen certificates. It seemed incredible that fifty thousand dollars could be contained in that one bundle of paper. But the cashier had not removed the certificates out of curiosity but merely to accelerate his search for a revolver; for the moment he produced the weapon he replaced the certificates and closed the suit-case, though he did not lock it.

Trembling with a new line of thought Dackett crept back to his chair, his face suffused with sweat. Why had he never considered it? Plimmer's death was the key which would lock the door against all possible detection. With every danger of detection eliminated, Dackett's criminal mind would not hesitate at murder. If Plimmer were found dead, indubitably the victim of his own violence, the betrayal of his trust would be the motive for his taking off. Alone and friendless, hunted by men, haunted by his crime, his suicide would be the logical climax. Dead, he would tell no secrets. It would be supposed he had hidden the money before entering the hotel.

As every new situation emanates fresh complications, Dackett now found it necessary to go over the ground with extreme care. He could enter 566 by going into the hall and rapping on the door. But every door he had to pass through, every second he was delayed in the hall, was too great a menace. He could enter through the connecting door providing it were unlocked; or, if locked, providing he could find the requisite key.

It would never do to leave that door unlocked. If it were unlocked now some means of locking it must be devised before he entered upon the fulfilment of his new plan. He could proceed no farther till he had ascertained this fact by a delicate test

of the door-knob. First, however, he peeped through the keyhole and observed that Plimmer was still at the table, his head bowed between his hands.

 WITH infinite care, turning the knob scarcely a millimeter at a time, he finally satisfied himself the door was fast. Good!

His next problem was to find a key that would open it. His keen gaze swiftly swept the room and halted on the key in the hall door. Apparently the two locks were identical. He could not know for a certainty till he had put the key to the test. If it failed to work Plimmer might take the alarm. But he was prepared for such a possibility. He would call the cashier softly by name and demand that he open the door and let him in. Plimmer would not dare to refuse.

He now took up his proposed action inside the room. He need fear nothing till the deed had been committed; still the entire situation must pivot evenly. He indulged in another glance through the keyhole. Plimmer had not changed his position. His lethargy could not be the abandonment of despair; it was slumber, the relaxation of a mind continuously haunted by the fear of detection. This gave Dackett confidence that he could gain the room unsuspected if the key would but work.

Now came the final and most important bit of scheming.

He would be guilty of no overt act till the deed was consummated, when his cunning must be exquisite. He must obtain the money, leave the revolver in a logical position, return to his own room, lock the connecting door, replace the key in its proper lock—and then call up the office on the telephone and give the alarm. But the fifty certificates? They must be disposed of before any one reached the scene.

He frowned to no purpose for several moments. He opened his suit-case to see if they could be slipped in between the linings; then abandoned the idea, fearing to have them in his possession.

He insisted his hypothesis should exclude every possibility of suspicion. As he was closing the case he noticed a long envelope, such as he often used in mailing important documents. It was capable of containing bulky papers and was very tough. Mentally estimating the thickness of the fifty certificates he snapped his fingers noise-

lessly and quickly addressed the envelope to his correct home address.

His mode of procedure was now orderly and logical. After regaining his room he would lock the door, replace the key, summon the management in an excited voice, seal up the certificates, rush into the hall as if running to meet the office attachés—and mail the envelope in the chute at the side of the elevators.

It answered every test. In no possible way could they connect him with the dead man in 566. If he found it impossible to mail the envelope in the chute unobserved he could safely carry it in his pocket to the office and there drop it into the box. For he cunningly appreciated the fact that his pausing to mail a letter, right on the heels of a suicide in the next room to his, might impress a reflective mind as being curious. Thus the only point to be determined by developments would be the posting of the letter at the end of the hall.

For good measure he seated himself before the table and carefully considered every move as planned. He was positive Plimmer's hall door was locked. Should he leave his own locked? What if some one should enter his room by mistake while he was in 566? There was hardly a chance of such an intrusion, yet every hypothesis, except that of suicide, must be eliminated, and he decided to lock his own door.

This was the only addition he made to his plans. If the key did not fit the connecting door he must recast every move up to the point where he retreated to his own room.

But the key worked; and, with his mind calmly grasping every detail of his plot, Dackett stepped softly into the room and behind the bowed figure.



IT HAD been so simple of accomplishment that Dackett could hardly restrain a smile as for the tenth time he related to the clerk and coroner the little he knew about the homicide in 566. Fate, instead of blocking him, had actually given him aid; for no sooner had he entered his room and called the office on the telephone than a bell-boy happened along and began pounding on the door of 566. Thus, instead of being the prime source of information, he was almost lost sight of in the importance attached to the bell-boy as a witness.

He had telephoned to the office as

planned and had entered the hall just as the bell-boy raced ahead of him for the elevators. One of the cars was ascending and, as the boy was blind with excitement and had eyes only for the twinkling light three floors below, the long letter was slipped into the chute unobserved.

After a superficial examination of the body and the wound in the right temple the coroner pronounced himself satisfied it was a clear case of suicide and graciously said he did not believe it would be necessary to call Mr. Wells to the inquest. Then the body and the revolver and the suit-case were removed to the morgue and the hotel-management tried to act as though nothing had happened.

Dackett strolled into the café and called for a drink. He felt no need for stimulants, but deemed it wise to play the part of a man who was temporarily unstrung by the tragedy. Then, to line up his course of action for the next twenty-four hours, he left the café and leisurely walked for several miles up and down, back and across the main arteries of travel.

After the lapse of some two hours he returned to the hotel and visited the desk to request another room. For he had decided during his saunter not to leave the hotel till the next day. The clerk was busily engaged with some one behind the cashier's partition and it was necessary to tap the bell to get any attention.

"Excuse me, Mr. Wells," apologized the clerk, emerging. "But here's a rich go! That chap that shot himself is Plimmer, the absconding Wellsville cashier, the feller who stole fifty thousand paper dolls. What d'ye know about that?"

The last was not put as a query, but rather was a rhetorical straining to express amazement.

"Indeed!" said Dackett, foolishly beginning to experience a deadly fear.

And yet the very safety of his scheme had depended on the immediate identification of Plimmer. Plimmer buried unidentified would complicate the disposition of the certificates.

"It'll make quite a sensation," he added.

"I should say so!" babbled the clerk. "Newspaper men been 'round here thicker'n

flies. Another room? Yes, sir. Quite natural, sir."

And he turned to shuffle the room-cards, continuing over his shoulder:

"Very annoying, but the management shouldn't be blamed if folks will come here and shoot themselves. Still it makes it bad for the house. I—Great Scott! I come near forgetting something. Did you mail this?"

And, reaching to a hook, he removed a long envelope and held it before Dackett's startled eyes.

"There's nothing but the address on the outside—addressed to a Mr. Dackett. But I thought the writing was yours, sir. Reminded me of your signature," blandly explained the clerk.

The envelope had not been opened. No one could know its contents, and, with a bluster of annoyance, Dackett readily replied,

"It's mine. But why'n the devil is it held here?"

"No postage on it," gently replied the clerk. "If your name had been on the outside I'd stamped it. Didn't know but what it was mailed by some one from the street. Six cents due, sir."

Dackett felt the earth being pulled from under him. It seemed impossible that, after all his nicety of calculations he should have neglected so vital a matter.

"Give me the stamps," he muttered.

"Beg pardon, sir," politely broke in a low voice at his elbow; "but I'm a post-office inspector. At the coroner's suggestion I request you to open this letter. When the clerk hung it on the hook he made two small holes. Through these has protruded something that arouses official curiosity."

As Dackett stared at the stranger, his dry lips refusing to utter the speech he had framed, the coroner walked heavily from behind the cashier's partition and growled:

"Plimmer was dead when you shot him through the head. Used cyanide and died instantly. Left a confession, which says the fifty stolen certificates were in his suit-case. Don't know just how the law will deal with you for shooting a dead man, but it's mighty strict against receivers of stolen property. Take him along, Reynolds!"

THE SHANGHAIED POLICEMAN



A Tale of Sunday's Boarding-house by S.B.H. Hurst.

THE boarding-house was in South Brooklyn—known as “Sunday’s”—the very toughest joint frequented by men of the sea. The “Boss” was a Jew—short man with curly black hair. An incessant chewer of tobacco he was. In some mysterious way he “had something on” the majority of the captains of sailing-vessels that came to the Port of New York.

He flourished exceedingly. He was the first unofficial person to board an incoming vessel, strutting like an owner about the poop. He never repainted the boarding-house, or the saloon or the restaurant on either side of it. He charged outrageous prices for all he sold, using the lower floor of the house as a clothing-store. He gave men he liked ten dollars for a sixty-dollar advance-note—those he disliked, nothing. And he shanghaied when the opportunity arose.

Now, as a sportsman needs dogs, so does a man of Sunday’s profession need runners—creatures ready to do whatever he bids, from killing a man to shipping a crew in the wrong ship. But their every-day duty is to go on board an incoming vessel, with sundry bottles of poison which they maintain to be strong liquors, and persuade the shore-crazy sailors that the boarding-house kept by the kind and generous Sunday is recognized as rivaling the best hotels for comfort. Mr. Sunday employed two of

these worthies; one a Liverpool Irishman, named Connoly, and the other a gentleman of doubtful parentage called Briggs.



ONE morning in January the Boss called his assistants into the dark and noisome den he used as an office.

“Shut the door tight,” he commanded as they entered.

The order being complied with, he beckoned them over to his desk, and whispered: “Connoly, how long can I send you up for?”

“Aw, what have I done—ferget it, carn’t yer?” replied the Liverpool Irishman.

Sunday grinned at his trepidation, and asked a similar question of Briggs; receiving a similar answer.

“Well, I just wanted to remind you, in case you don’t like the job I got for you, that it’s a whole lot better than the kind of work you gets up the river.”

Most men of his type would have used strong language in opening a conversation of this sort, to make it more impressive, but Sunday rather prided himself on his infrequent use of swear-words.

“It’s the new cop,” said the boarding-house keeper.

“To — with him!” said Connoly. “Want us to buy him a drink?”

“Don’t shoot off your mouth so quick,” said Sunday. “Of course, I know you guys dodges the bulls that comes round here,”

he grinned. "You has good reason. But this one has been holding me up a bit more than I care about. He wants five hundred dollars."

"— what nerve!" said Connoly.

"Ain't it!" replied his master. "Why, Flynn would have swore on a stack of Bibles for a five spot. If that brother of mine — Ikey, the one you don't know — wasn't so fond of Fifth Avenue beats, I'd get the Chief to put him on here, but he's too stuck up. If you two don't behave, I'll get him his promotion by putting him next you! But about this O'Hara—keep out of his sight. He ain't ever seen you. And fix him right—do it to-night. You know what I mean."

"Fall him off the dock?" asked Briggs.

"You fool," rasped Connoly, "and him on the Force? Don't you know that the bulls would have to get us to save their face? Ain't you got any sense?"

The other, the larger man of the twain, flushed and remained silent.

"What ships is sailing for round the Horn, morning tide?" asked Sunday.

Connoly mentioned several, but when he came to the *John Macdonald*, a red-hot Nova Scotiaman, the boarding-house keeper held up his hand.

"That's her. I can get Ball, the skipper, to see that the bull is sent aloft on a broken foot-rope, or something. Ball's got to do what I tell him," he said.

"Don't think it a bit risky, do you?" asked Connoly.

"It's up to you—you're doin' it. If you don't, you go up. If you do, nobody will ever know about it, unless you tell. Suit yourselves," said Sunday.

"I'll go aboard to-night and see Ball," said Sunday, after their silent consent. "Here's twenty for expenses—go to it."



THIS job of shanghaiing the policeman was the hardest and most dangerous undertaking that had come the way of the two runners since they had begun to work at their present job. They couldn't help themselves, for Sunday had too much pull for them to dream of squealing and so, with the coming of darkness—they felt thankful it was so very dark—they repaired to a neighboring saloon, and began acquiring much-needed courage across the bar.

Officer O'Hara, the victim of Sunday's

displeasure, came on shift at six in the evening. The ship they had decided to honor with his services, the *John Macdonald*, was lying in a neighboring dock, ready to sail two hours after midnight. All they had to do was to get him on board in a condition of log-like inactivity.

Sheltered from the driving sleet, the runners agreed that the time to get their man was when he was relieved at midnight. He would not be missed, as he would be if he failed to finish his shift. So, at a quarter to twelve, they crouched in a convenient hiding-place, while the cold counteracted the effects of the whisky they had consumed. Then they heard footsteps and voices; the report of the relieved patrolman, the "all right" of the sergeant, then the footsteps of the relief patrolman and sergeant going away from them, while their victim came past them, and turned the corner to walk to the street-car line.

They followed on tiptoe. Then, running the few yards which intervened, Briggs sprang on the unfortunate man's shoulders, while Connoly hit him on the head with a sand-bag, and the first part was done.

But they could not delay to congratulate themselves. The other policeman might come around any minute, and they had a full quarter of a mile to go to the ship. Again they blessed the darkness and, half carrying, half dragging the unconscious man, they started to make what speed they could.

"Where are we going to take his uniform off?" grunted Briggs.

"Back of the nitrate shed."

"Is he going out without any clothes or blankets?"

"Sure," said Connoly. "What do you think the skipper would get out of this if he couldn't sell him his outfit out of the slop-chest?"

"And Sunday'll get his three months' advance for nothing, as usual?"

"That's how he makes his money, ain't it?"

"I guess so," puffed Briggs. "What'll he make out of the *Macdonald*?"

"He shipped sixteen, including O'Hara here, and didn't give any of 'em any more than a five-spot for their advances—sixty dollars each—figger it out for yourself," said Connoly.

"It's——" began the other. "Sh-h!"

He became suddenly silent, and they both listened intently. They heard foot-

steps approaching from the direction they themselves were taking.

They were on an open stretch of the sidewalk on a made road between two parts of the dock and, since there were no buildings of any kind, no hiding-place offered. Dark as it was, Connoly thought it well to snatch the telltale helmet off O'Hara's head, trusting to luck that the stranger would not notice the brass uniform buttons. He also saw that his sand-bag was handy, desperately making up his mind to kill the coming man if he discovered the nature of their business—feeling that he would rather chance the chair than risk the vengeance of the police.

Making the unconscious man appear as naturally drunk as they could, they proceeded slowly, uttering endearing terms, such as "Brace up, old man," "We'll get you home all right," "Steady up," and the various remarks the situation seemed to call for.

Then out of the sleet a figure loomed in the darkness, and some characteristic movement showed them it was Sunday, although it was too dark to see his face, and the relief was so great that the two runners doubled up with laughter, letting the policeman fall on the sidewalk and roll into the slush of the road.

"So you fixed the swine, all right?" said the boarding-house keeper.

"You bet," replied Connoly.

Sunday stepped off the sidewalk and brutally kicked the recumbent figure.

"So you would buck me, eh, would you?" he said, continuing the kicking.

His rage got the better of his judgment, and he kicked the unconscious man so hard and so often that even the servile Connoly was moved to protest.

"Aw, don't kill him, Boss," he said. "We can't shanghai a corpse."

"Can't, eh?" said Sunday, ceasing to kick, however. "Well, let me tell you that I've shanghai'd more than one dead man in my time, and out in Frisco it's a regular trade. So put that in your pipe, and don't say 'can't' to me."

Briggs started to pick up the man.

"If we don't get out of here," he said, "this feller's mate'll be along, and then there *will* be the deuce to pay."

"Go ahead," said Sunday. "I've just come from the ship, and I told the skipper all about it. There won't be nobody to meet you, and the crowd's asleep in the

fo'c'sle. Put him in an empty bunk, and Ball will give him the time of his life. All I wish is that I could let this get into the papers so it would be a warning to them there bulls to leave me and my business alone."

He went on his way. The runners got their victim over the short distance yet to be traveled and behind the nitrate shed, without meeting any one else. There they stripped him of all identifying clothing and carried him to the ship clothed only in an undershirt.

Up the gangway and along the wet deck to the snore-filled fo'c'sle they took him, unhindered. Then they tossed him into an empty bunk, in which was no sign of mattress or blankets. And so, wondering what sort of a cold he would get, but not worried about it, they left him, just as the mate bellowed to the bos'n to rouse the crowd on deck, and get her out of dock. They left with the comfortable feeling of work well done, and returned to the boarding-house; taking with them the uniform for later disposal.



SUNDAY lingered over his breakfast next morning, feeling very well satisfied with himself. He had effectually disposed of an enemy who had threatened his most vulnerable part—his pocketbook—and he had made a nice little sum out of the *John Macdonald*. He actually bought the two runners a drink, but was careful to have an accounting of the expense-money.

The weather having cleared up, he went to stand at the door of his saloon to enjoy the air. Imagine his feelings when he saw coming down the street, jauntily swinging his club, chest stuck out, O'Hara, the man he thought was somewhere at sea in the good ship *John Macdonald*, clothed generally in an undershirt.

"Mornin'," said the patrolman, coming toward the door.

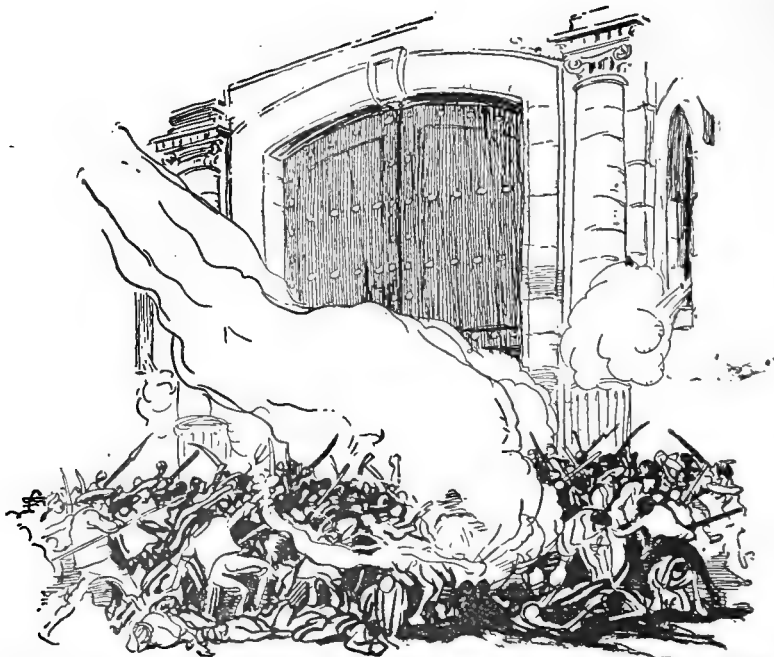
"Morn-in'," gasped Sunday.

"Seen anything of your brother?" asked O'Hara.

"My brother?"

"Sure. I was off last night, and the Captain give him my beat. Something must have happened to him, though, because nobody's seen him since he was relieved at twelve. Do you know where he is?"

"No," began Sunday brokenly, "I—don't—know—where—he—"



ADASH OF IRISH

A Tale of Mexico's War for Independence

by W.F. McCaleb and Eugene P. Lyle Jr.

CHAPTER I

THE PASQUINADE

PLAIN and good Irish O'Donohue was the name of that good Spanish family the O'Donojus, to start with. But one day a blue-eyed bantling of the name found himself at Covadonga splitting Moors from pate to midriff for the Faith and a Ferdinand of Castile.

"It should be spelled with a 'j,'" said the King after the battle.

"So long as you pronounce it with an 'h'," persisted the bold lad. "O'Donohue. Sol!"

"That is what I said," said the King. "O'Donojul!"

For, with a 'j' or an 'h', they were pronouncing it the same, and the Irish lad was

too polite to set a King right on his spelling, especially as the King was writing him down a Knight of the Grand Cross of Calatrava.

Thus began the illustrious line of the O'Donoju, as exalted as any in Spain, and thus they kept it up through the generations, achieving honor and titles and deep, dark-black eyes.

Finally, after some hundred of years, or in the year 1810, an O'Donoju finds himself in the New World, seated high. He is a lieutenant captain-general. He is the Governor of the Province of Vera Cruz. His eyes are black. But he is old, and his hair is white. A life spent in loyal service to another Ferdinand has mellowed the ancient hidalgo hauteur of his lineage.

For thirty years he has held his vicarious scepter in these western possessions. The wife of his youth is dead, and he is resigned to dying in the new land. Yet he would

cast back a tendril of his own flesh across the waters, and so cling to the land of his birth. This tendril is his only child, Don Felix.

 DON FELIX, centuries removed from the sod of Erin, was the first of the O'Donoju to be born in a brand-new world. Removed likewise by generations of eyes that were black, Don Felix gazed on his New World with eyes of Ireland's own blue. He might have been the blithe slayer of Moors over again.

The boy was eighteen when his father, the Governor, sent him across the ocean to cloistered Salamanca to school. But outside, all Europe was another sort of school-room. Men were learning that they were men, and they were reciting the lesson out loud. The French Revolution, for instance. So that the blue-eyed young rascal drilling through musty volumes in the Colegio de Nobles Irlandeses grew restive. He discovered that any echo of the strange din outside tremendously shocked his tutors and the bishop in his palace—yes, and even the King in his. So he stirred the echoes and raised the dust—until they sent him back to his father.

At the least he had lasted three years in Salamanca, and at the worst he had only learned more than was intended. For beneath his joyous mischief there throbbed a brave heart, famishing for brave ideas, though these ideas were new and strange and plebeian, spawning Revolution and Terror.

It was late Summer of this year 1810 when the lonely old Governor in his New World palace received back the tendril so fondly cast over the waters.

"I rather think, dear father," said Don Felix, cheerfully though very tenderly, "that I like my own country best."

The black eyes opened wide. "Thine own country, boy? And pray, where is that if not that Spain where—"

The blue eyes laughed happily. "If not where I was born, father! Here, father, here, among the magnolias and palms, where I can see Orizaba's snowy cap. Here, where—where—my mother was born."

"Thy mother," the Governor reminded him gently, "was of the line of the Dukes of Albuquerque crossed by the conqueror Alvarado. There is no purer Spanish strain."

"Still," said the boy, "she was born here.

So she was a Creole. So am I a Creole. A Creole, a Mexican, father."

A pang touched the old hidalgo's breast. "Would you, even you, Felix, draw that old dividing-line?" he murmured bitterly. "Spaniard and Creole, always Spaniard and Creole! Say rather, father and son. Say rather, Mother-Country and colony. And say it, Felix, not like a rebellious child, as the Creoles do. Ah well," he sighed, "call yourself 'American', since that is the Creole fashion, and call your father 'European'; call us 'Gachupins.' Yes, yes, each young O'Donoju must have his jest while the drop of the Irish is hot in him; and have yours, lad, so only—so only it does not touch your loyalty to the King."

At mention of the King, the Governor slightly bowed his head, and Felix saddened at sight of it. He pictured that King, a King over Castilian grandees, yet a King truckling to Napoleon Bonaparte while Joseph Bonaparte sat his throne and a fugitive regency clutched at the tatters of kingship.

"I'm off for a stroll, father," he said hastily. "I want to see how my native town looks, after three long years."

"Beware, though, of mischief," said the Governor, with an indulgent smile, yet earnestly. "Mischief here would be of a man's size, and you are a boy no longer. Here we have the Inquisition and His Majesty's muskets, not flabby-jowled school-teachers, to make an end of mischief."

The lad's eyes danced hopefully.

"Mischief, even here?" he exclaimed. "The saints! I'm growing fonder of my native town already! My cloak, my hat, my cloak! I'm off!"

 ALONE, with a bright nod, he returned the salute of the tawny guards at the palace gates. The palms of his father's garden stirred overhead to the breeze from the Gulf, and in the twilight their stately, feathery tops breathed mystery and subtle promise of adventure. The young man drew his rich cloak to his chin, and passed jauntily, with a sensuous thrill of rapture, out into the street.

There was a narrow flag pavement under his feet, and an occasional yellow light, proudly yclept "municipal illumination," to guide his steps. A town of stone it was, and balconies, and barred windows; and the narrow streets were laid out by the compass.

A rich town, the outer gateway for tropical treasure, yet a dozing, indolent town; a town whence many a golden galleon had sailed for Spain. A modern town for 1810, yet still a port for adventurers, mixing with sailors and muleteers; a town still capable of medieval panic if a fisher-fleet looked like buccaners from off the Spanish Main. Indeed, an eminently adequate town for a larking young O'Donoju, however you spell his name.

He soon turned into the Plaza, the natural center of the city, flanked on its four sides by buildings of Church, State and commerce, itself a tropical bower weighting the air with fragrance, where the band played sometimes of an evening, where the genteel took the air after the heat of the day, where cafés and shops were temptingly alight.

There had been a blustering shower, one of the last of the rainy season, and many people were out, lazily seeking a cool breath in the hotly steaming world, sauntering idly under the wet leaves or lolling on benches. Creoles in their elegance, often a shabby elegance, negroes, mulattos, *Indios*, *mestizos*—all were here, and the Spaniards too, but all slothful, at their ease; slothful and ox-like. Don Felix thought of Europe, rabid and afire with Revolution.

"Mischief, here?" he murmured, and a smile curled his lip. "Bah, raining needles would not goad them even to an argument. If there's one who has heard the name Rousseau, or Jefferson, or Mr. Tom Paine, I'd call him brother, only for being so refreshingly different. No use, though. And as for mischief, the dear father had sold me clean as a whistle. Who'd ever thought him so sly at a jest, or anything at a jest!"

He turned, vaguely homesick for lively, bustling old Europe, and started down another street for a look at the Gulf. That might help. But he had gone only a little way when he heard the low murmuring confusion of many voices, and now and then one rising stridently above the others. Hurrying, he came to a little plaza and found it crowded with people, surging and struggling about the great wooden doors of the church there, the church of Santa Rosa.

"Well, we'll see at any rate," he said to himself, but with no concession to hope. "Hey, thou," he said gripping a blanketed peon by the collar and twisting him around till they were face to face, "and what's the stir now? What's in the kettle?"

"It's another pasquinade, señor," stammered the man, touching his sombrero.

"Pasquinade? I do not understand."

"A pasquinade, nailed there on the church door. And if the soldiers learn who did it, I think they will shoot him."

Don Felix looked. Some one was holding a lantern to the door, and a little above the heads of the crowd. Pressing closer to see, if not to read, Don Felix made out a square of white paper against the door.

"But what does it say?" he demanded of his captive.

"I do not know what it will say," replied the man. "Your worship should know I can not read, and even if——"

"Then, then," said Don Felix, "and if it is so important as to breed riot, why, I'll read it for you! Come!"

He started through the throng, but the man clung to him. "Do not go, señor," he pleaded. "Do not, for if the soldiers see you reading that they will hale you before the Inquisition. It is something political. The King will be angry, and the reading of it is forbidden."

"Now," thought Don Felix, "what would Mr. Rousseau or Mr. Paine say to that? The 'Rights of Man'! Bless us, the rights of swine we have, and let us be thankful!"

Vaguely indignant, though none of this could touch a son of the Governor of Vera Cruz, he freed himself of the peon and played his elbows into the crowd.



HE CAME at last through the excited people to the door of the church and, by a lantern held by one of the throng, he saw the paper that was so disturbing to the populace.

The printing on it held him first. Obviously the type was of wood, and laboriously made by hand, for the characters were rudely done and smeared the paper unevenly.

"Smile if you like, my friend," said the man with the lantern, "but what would you do, when to own type is a crime, unless you use it to praise the cynical tyranny of your Mother-Country? This type, señor, I happen to know, was smuggled in—a grave risk, too—in gourds filled with fruit."

"You seem to know," said Don Felix, "much that might not be good for you!"

The man, he noted, was young, perhaps younger than himself, and dressed plainly, like a merchant's son. But fire glowed in his eyes, and he had a certain recklessness

in his bearing that seemed to provoke and defy peril. At Don Felix's words, sounding like a threat, he held the lantern close to his face, and for a moment the two young fellows took toll of each other like two cocks on the walk.

"When a pasquinade is our only liberty of the press," said he of the lantern, "then it's hard to hold the tongue. And now that I have said too much, let us hear, Señor Gachupin, what you are going to do about it?"

"I am no Gachupin," retorted Don Felix, "but a Mexican, an American, like yourself. And I also enjoy saying what I think. And I think, señor, that this pasquinade here is nothing so lofty as liberty of anything, but only silly childish verses making fun of our new Viceroy. Tell me, where's the sense in saying that His Excellency's face lacks excellence, or that he dresses like Napoleon?"

"There's good sense," protested the man, "in making the people laugh at any and every European sent here to rule over us. Would you like to hear them laugh? Wait. I will read the verses to them again."

He turned to the crowd, raising his arm for attention, and began on the verses, mimicking the strut and frown of the Viceroy, who only a few days before had landed in Vera Cruz on his way to Mexico City. But he of the lantern had not finished the first line when a voice from the nervously laughing throng cried out in a warning:

"Heigh-ho, señor, save yourself! The soldiers!"

The throng tried to scatter, while among them rode troopers with lances set. The leader gained the church door, dismounted and snatched off the lampooning verses. The young fellow with the lantern began to laugh, and a taunting, insulting laugh it was. The officer, in tearing away the pasquinade, merely confronted a second one beneath, and this one, by the light of the young man's lantern considerably held for him, he was reading.

"Whew," exclaimed Don Felix, "there's ginger in this one!" And like the officer, he read the second pasquinade, which scathingly denounced the Mexican soldiers who hired themselves to Europeans for oppressing their countrymen. The officer ground his teeth, and Don Felix laughed outright.

The officer whirled and seized him by the shoulder.

"You nailed it there," he charged. "You——"

Don Felix laughed again, and shook his head, but in the moment he was unexpectedly freed. The man with the lantern had abruptly swung it in the officer's face, had caught Don Felix by the sleeve and whispered,

"Quick! Run! Follow me!"

And Don Felix followed, still laughing. The thing smacked of a prank, and he was in for it heartily.

CHAPTER II

A SEAT FOR DON FELIX

IN THE huge wooden doors of the church, flung open only on Good Fridays and other great days, there swung an ordinary door for all times, and through this Don Felix's new acquaintance slipped into the dark church, with Don Felix close behind. Both had easily eluded the clutching grip of the dazed officer, while the lancers were busily riding down the scattering crowd. Across the stone floor of the musty cavernous church the two fugitives groped their way, avoiding pillars, and coming quickly to a little side door.

Out this door, and they were in a narrow empty street. But the lancers were clattering down it a block away. Don Felix and his companion, took to their heels in the opposite direction.

At the first turn, under the yellow splotch of a street lamp, they charged plump into a mighty, gold-braided, ill-omened-visaged son of Mars on a prancing, fretful steed. Don Felix's companion, who was ahead, stumbled to his knees under the shock.

"Pest! More pasquinaders!" grunted the martial cavalier, drawing his saber.

His horse pawed the air as he leaned from the saddle, aiming for the head of the man under him.

"No, by my faith, not that!" cried Don Felix. "Nay, nay, one does not saber people so casually!"

His words marked time to a sudden, rapt activity. His hand flew to the horse's bit. The horse went to its haunches and, at a sharp twist of the bit, reared and hurtled backwards, flinging its rider to the pavement.

Don Felix was for finishing the argument, so soon as his cruel-featured adversary

should regain his feet, but the young fellow of the lantern was already up, and had him by the elbow, and was urging him frantically to the top speed of his legs.

"After that," he panted, "after that—oh, the beautiful upheaval of a Gachupin!—you either run with me, or I stay with you. Only run! A race! See, I'm gaining on you."

"The devil and you are?" panted Don Felix. "A race? Then look sharp, and you'll see my heels."

Hoofs rang on the stones behind them, and they heard the slap-slap of sandals as the rabble hotted on the pursuit. The clatter brought heads to barred windows and filled the balconies, but no one else interfered except a squat little policeman, whom Don Felix toppled over mirthfully for his presumption. One turning, and another, each into a darker, narrower street, and finally a third at last threw their pursuers off. They were in a passage that could have been an alley only, so dark and evil-smelling was it.

"I hope it's not into the pestilence quarter you're taking me," Don Felix managed between breaths. "I'd not like to bring the black vomit to my father!"

"Have no fear," his companion answered, as they ran; "yet it's pestilence many will name it, before there's an end. Keep your wind. We're 'most there now."

"So long as it's nothing will touch my father," said Don Felix. "It's a fine grand adventure and delectable mystery this far, and farther I'll go, be sure."

"Stop!" whispered the other. "We all but passed the place. I know it none too well at best."

He felt along the wall at his right, retracing his steps until he found a gate of solid wood. With his arm yet in the hole for pulling the latch, he turned to Don Felix.

"My friend," he said, "after what you have done for me to-night, I shall take you in safety with me, asking neither pledge nor oath, yet I must tell you first that if you later speak of what you may see, the lives of my friends—nay of a nation yet unborn—will have to pay for it." He flung wide the gate. "After you, señor."

Don Felix bowed, and stepped in. The sky was still over his head. He could see the stars. A muck, sobby from the rains, yielded under his tread.



NOW what hospitality was this, so solemnly offered? They were in a corral, the adjunct of a stable! And the friends whose lives were forfeit, and the nation unborn whose fate was at stake? There were burros in the corral, shredding corn-stalks between their teeth.

"Heigh now," demanded Don Felix, "and am I to laugh, my friend the conspirator?"

"I do not believe you will," the other returned gravely. "Come."

"A nasty slush for boots of morocco, at any rate," grumbled Don Felix. "But I'm too sore puzzled to quit you now. *Marchons, les enfants!*"

He followed his earnest young guide into a darker, roofed-over space, a sort of carriage-house where several horses were stabled, then across a bare, unkempt rear patio, littered with empty packing-cases, many of them rotting. Grass and weeds thrived between the stones underfoot.

And so they came to a basement door. Don Felix's companion rapped, waited and rapped again. Some one came from within, lifted a heavy bar, unhooked a chain and opened the door.

"Thank you, Don Ramon," Don Felix's guide addressed the person within the dark doorway, "and pardon me, but we were pursued, and I knew of no escape except here."

"Oh, then 'tis you, José!" spoke a cheery voice. "Come in, come in, quickly, if you can see your way in the dark. Aye, I've been hearing our lancers raging through the streets, and the whole town in turmoil. And it was you stirred them up? I might have known. Reckless again, José."

"Some one must dare to read the pasquinades to the people," said José. "Yet it would have been my last, except for a new friend here, whom I venture to bring to this shelter with me."

"Right, right," said their host heartily. "Have you barred the door behind you? Then come. Victoria will be having a pot of chocolate on the coals. And you too, señor, come. Permit me, your cloak. You are very welcome. You are in your own house, señor."

It was a stately hospitality for a pitch-dark basement-room, not at all tallying with black conspiracy. Not one countersign had they whispered. There was nothing more enlightening than a lone

flickering candle in the adjoining room, which they now entered. Here were wash-tubs, a brass boiler over a charcoal *brasero*, irons and an ironing-board, and clothes hung on a line across the room. Naught could be more disarming. Yet why had the host, a middle-aged, genial, cultured host, why had he not brought the candle to the outer door? Why had he made so certain that no ray of light might be seen when he opened that door? And why now, after a barely imperceptible interchange of glances with José, did he not invite them to a pleasanter apartment? Surely a man such as he appeared to be was not accustomed to entertaining guests in the laundry of his dwelling. And yet, with only the perfunctory apology he would make for an elegant drawing-room, he bowed Don Felix to a seat on one of the benches beside a tub, and José to another, then withdrew.

Soon he returned, and was followed shortly after by a girl bearing a tray. The pitcher on the tray, filled with chocolate, the cups and saucers, the plate of small cakes—these were of rare, thin china that might have come from a sideboard of baronial oak. And the girl? At the first dazed vision of her Don Felix knew that she must surely have stepped from marble floors down into this region of half-wet family wash.



JOSÉ sprang to take the tray, and Don Felix stood rigidly at attention, flushed, his eyes aglow, his head floating dizzily.

"My daughter, Victoria, señor," said their host.

Don Felix bent from the waist. "Felix —" he began, but stopped before giving his name entire. "After all," he caught himself up, laughing, "I am only Don Felix, but wholly, absolutely, at your orders, señorita."

"And give him a cup of chocolate, dear," said her father, "for saving Don José's life, and do keep him here an hour to save his own."

Her eyes opened wide on him as she held forth the cup and saucer, and the cup rattled in the saucer as he took them, for his eyes did not leave hers. They were soft brown eyes he looked into, of tender, wondrous depths. All of her seemed made for the giving of sympathy, and for carrying a heart, a gentle, madonna heart that

yearned over every poor, stricken creature, excepting only young men idolaters. And withal she was—in his own heart Don Felix groaned—so very adorable. So excruciatingly adorable! The ache of it went to his arms, and he wondered, until in consternation he realized that his arms were aching—for her!

Perhaps a little hurt by his gaze, or disconcerted to find herself gazing so at him, she turned to José.

"Tell me of it," she said.

"Do!" echoed her father.

"That I will!" cried José. "Know then that there was a madman with a sword, a madman on a horse and, in the moment I would have been brained, I looked and suddenly I saw madman, horse and sword littering the street as if they'd been spilled from a dice-box. Don Felix did that, señorita. But how, I do not know, for he is not a giant. Ask him for yourself."

She turned slowly to Don Felix, obviously against her will.

"Do you find your chocolate sweet enough?" she faltered. But she had looked again on this blithe, blue-eyed youthful Greek god of a person who casually toppled over madmen and horses in the street. She had seen his deprecating flush of annoyance at the praise of him, and she had liked it. Also she had surprised the fun dancing in his eyes as he recalled the escapade, and somehow, in spite of herself, she liked that, too.

His hair waved long and happy-go-luckily, and utter boyishness bubbled in him. But there was an unconscious distinction in his bearing, an easy fastidiousness about his attire, from the low top-boots to the high white neck-cloth, and the slightest, barely definable hint of latent arrogance, or just overweening self-confidence, which seemed to suggest a young nobleman. Yet, and this was best of all and past doubt, his clean features, the winning frankness of his smile, the good forehead, proclaimed the gentleman as well.

To her he was a stranger. She remembered now that he had withheld his name. She pursed her lips at that, and still she wondered who he was.

But Felix revealed nothing of himself. He was not thinking of it, indeed, so absorbed was he with yearning to discover who this girl might be. The appearance of a sweet young girl in the pasquinading plot

had nettled his first curiosity to something ravenous. But they touched on no confidences, no explanations. Among the wash-tubs they made of him a formal caller, precisely as if he were received in a salon of gold and rose.

Her coming was but a part of this pains-taking courtesy. Yet he knew that they were only shielding him from the peril they believed he stood in. When they should do that and let him go, their obligation would cease. Or at most he had no claim on their trust, which might put their lives at his discretion—and he a stranger to them.

Having sipped at his chocolate and nibbled a cake he was constrained to suggest his going. He noted, in disappointment, that Don Ramon and his daughter opposed it only as far as courtesy would exact. After that, he would not stay. José, after a word with Don Ramon, came forward to guide him forth again to the now quiet streets, and there, though they did not say it, to let him go his way.

So he was making his adieux, first to the lady, bending over her hand, and lingering desperately, as though for his life's happiness's sake. As thus he backed toward the door, as once he had at court, the calf of his leg struck the edge of a tub on the floor, and over he went, sitting squarely, with heels in the air. His first thought was that he was glad, for the laughter and getting set right would defer his going by that much. But they were not laughing at him. They were not laughing at all. No breeding could be proof against a smile at such a time. But they were not smiling. Something else was on each of their faces.

The splash of his sitting down was not exactly liquid, but stifled, consistent, like sinking into a cushion. It could not be water and suds, as he first expected. He thought it starch. But why that look on their faces, as though he had tumbled into a bath of vitriol?

The look passed, and Don Ramon and José caught his hands to help him out. Don Ramon murmured anxious apologies, and something like a twinkle flashed into the girl's startled eyes at the young man's red cheeks and confusion. Once again on his feet, by instinct he put a hand behind him to brush himself off. The hand came away gummy and, as he held it to the candle, black.

"A thousand, thousand pardons," pro-

tested Don Ramon. "A servant has carelessly left a tub of—of pitch in the way, which was being used for— for——"

Don Felix turned over his hand under the light, abruptly looked up and grinned. "It's printer's ink!" he laughed.



AGAIN, at his words, that blank expression of alarm overspread their features. "By Santiago, what's the odds?" he exclaimed lightly. "I've stumbled into a secret, but—my faith, you saw the intrusion was—well, inadvertent."

His manner was disarming, reassuring, winning. It was the girl who recovered first. Suddenly she gave him her hand, and turned to the others.

"We will trust him," she said.

"As we must," said Don Ramon, "for what we do not tell him, he will guess. And yet, yet——"

He could not finish the sentence, under his own roof.

"And yet," you would say," interposed José, "'what if he is a spy?' Well, let him prove that he is not! I would not owe my life to a—— Don Felix, tell me to whom I do owe my life. Señor, your name?"

"I save no man's life to remind him of it," said Don Felix quickly. "Don José, you owe me nothing. But if you hold that I owe you my name——"

"Stop!" cried José. "I do not say that, and do not think it, only——oh, don't you see that we want to trust you—not to save ourselves, for here we are only three, but to make you a fourth, a fourth among thousands; to make you one of us. We want to trust you so we may tell you who we are!"

"That sounds different, very different," said Don Felix in a softened tone. "Whether you tell me, or whether I guess, the secret of this tub of ink is safe with me. Somewhere about, under this linen, there is the type, and the paper too, and possibly on that table there, covered over, there is the form set up of that very pasquinade on the church door that made the Lancer sergeant so wrathful. And from it you print philippics against all things Spanish. No doubt from this room the city is larded over with seditious sheets. I know. I have just sat in the miry seedbed of rebellion."

They nodded, involuntarily, at the incision of his wit. "I should like right well

indeed," he went on, "to know who you are, for I would—" he glanced at the girl—"count my friends as three more from this night. But as for what you are, what your secrets, do not tell me. There is much of that already that I must forget; so soon," he added with a glance, "as I can change my breeches."

Relief was growing in Don Ramon's shrewd eyes. He knew his man.

"Enough," he said. "You are an honest lad. I have decided. We will fill the sack, and if we do not win you with it, it will make but little more to be forgotten. José, you are our John the Baptist. Do you then tell him of that goddess—her name is Liberty, señor—who is to come."

"My faith," cried Don Felix, "you're in the fashion. And I want to hear."

CHAPTER III

POLITICS AND A PRETTY FOOT

STILL these courteous, hospitable folk, the cheery Don Ramon and the quiet, gentle girl, his daughter, did not ask him to some upper part of the house, where doubtless they could more gracefully entertain a guest. Don Felix, though, in a quaint twist of humor, reflected that this moist laundry basement, the source of revolutionary pasquinades, was the fittest temple for doing their proselyting in.

He waited, not very eager for the new ideas, on which he had already fed in a dilettante, boyishly mischievous way at Salamanca, nor very receptive, because all of his own ideas were scattered in adoration at the wee satin-shod feet of Señorita Victoria. They were baby blue, those low, embroidered shoes, and when his eyes dared no longer gaze on her face, they fell to the shoes and contemplated them earnestly.

But the soft flush that slowly spread in her cheeks and slowly fled held a hint of impatience. She had no thought for the coquetry of a pretty foot, none for the way of a maid with a man. She wanted just now the man himself, one man more and a likely man, for the Cause. And she wanted him to listen. Don Felix grew aware that one small shoe was beginning to tap the stone floor. He felt the reprimand, and hurriedly whipped his wits to strict attention. His new and earnest young

friend, Don José, was addressing him in quiet words of smoldering fire.

Of all José said, each syllable burning with a people's awakening sense of wrong, there is little need to speak. It was the old dreary tale over again, the tale of spike-soled tyranny, which is particularly the story of Spain.

The Spaniards were degraded, mentally and spiritually. Spain had drained the New World from the time of Philip, and even now was pressing for every possible peso to fight Napoleon. She took over loans held by the church, and foreclosed mortgage after mortgage, until farmers, merchants, miners, mechanics, lost all they had, and their native laborers could no longer earn bread. It was a merciless robbery of a whole people, farmed out to cruel and corrupt Spanish officers. Millions more were demanded in taxes and collected, while the Spaniards, to whom alone were reserved privileges and monopolies, were given the highest honors and offices, whether of Church or State.

Wound after wound rankled deep in the Creole's breast until, even while the son of the Governor of Vera Cruz listened to one of them, armed revolt was already ablaze in Caracas, in Buenos Aires, in New Granada, in Bogota, in Cartagena, and on down the continent of South America to Chile.

And in Mexico? For two years the coals had been glowing, but hidden; hidden under tinder and gunpowder, from the Gulf to the Pacific.

"As here, for instance," said José, indicating the dimly lighted room of the tubs and suds with one of his feverish gestures; "this basement—we call it a well, a *pozo*, and in a well a flame burns low, but at least it burns unseen, and we, the *Pozoleros*, tend it jealously till we can bring it forth and light the fires that will sweep Spain's dominion from our beloved country."

"Precisely," said Don Felix, slyly mimicking the young patriot's ardor.

But he was thrilled, despite himself. Here in his native land he was hearing the words of men, as men were learning to talk in Europe. Over there it was the novelty of the new ideas that had caught him, and the Irishman in him had loved them because they promised a fight, yet he had been for them only academically. He had found them sound, an excellent platform for hot debate. He gave no thought that

they menaced all the traditions of his lineage, all the privilege of his *hidalgo* condition. They captured his heart, because they were generous; and his head, because they were true. His self, his selfish self, lay deeper, undisturbed. To that depth they had not yet found a way. In Salamanca he had seemed to champion them, because they fretted his teachers; but here, listening to the tragic José, he seemed to mock them.

"Precisely, by Santiago!" he exclaimed, and brought down an open palm upon an ironing-board as José had done, while laughter danced in his eyes, and played about his mouth. He was thinking on the stock reproaches of a wounded Mother-Country to an ungrateful colony, meaning to inflame his eloquent friend the more, when he caught the girl's eyes on him, and saw a hurt look there that drove mischief from his thoughts.

"I see you smile, sir," she said, with a touch of disdain to her gently reproving words, "yet if you would reflect that Don José does risk his life with his words, risks it daily, devotedly . . . Oh, if you but knew the sublime renunciation one must give to cherish the cause of independence. If all men only knew the infinite faith it takes to believe in its triumph!"

"Bless us," cried Don Felix within himself, "here's a debater I must be wary of! As if—" and here he frowned—"I too would not risk a trifle like life. She need not think that this terrific Don José is the only spendthrift!"

"My life is nothing," said José quickly, "and, like a certain village priest I could tell you of, who patiently tends the little flame, I do not hope to live to see the triumph, for all of us who start the blaze will probably perish in it. Bear that in mind, señor, before you decide to join us."

"It is what I should bear least in mind," said Don Felix coldly, "nor is it *that* which could hold me back."

"Aye, José, and he had nothing of perish in his mind when he saved you to-night from your murderous horseman," Don Ramon interrupted soothingly.

"I meant it not that way," José protested. "It is only what I say to every recruit."

"But in this case, Don José," said the girl, "you might have saved your breath, I think," whereupon gratitude leaped with adoration in the heart of the Governor's

son. "Use it, rather," she urged, "to tell him the great news you come bringing to us in Vera Cruz, as well as to our brothers in Jalapa, in the capital or wherever a few of us meet, as here, to toil and plan, and plan and toil, for freedom. Oh, tell him, José, you the messenger of that patriot priest, tell him that at last the glorious day is set when——"

"Victoria!" cried her father sternly, while José himself paled in alarm.

✠ "IT IS not," Don Ramon went on, turning to Don Felix, "that we do not trust you, señor, but what Victoria was about to say is not-ours to tell. That is sacred to our country, and may be told only to the few who are pledged to her independence. We hope for that pledge from you. We need every man such as you, and we have told you what we can, hoping to win you. Eh, señor, do you withhold the pledge? Come, come, courtesy requires your answer."

So at last the issue was joined. At last the new ideas had pierced to the selfish self of the young Creole nobleman. As to all men, to him at last they had come for decision. They had put the strife of Europe, the internecine battle of mankind, in his soul. It could not be fought out on the instant. He looked from one to the other helplessly. He was moved by the eager pleading on the face of the girl, and his lips, involuntarily, moved to speak. But he remembered his father, the white-haired Governor in his palace, representing the might of Spain, the word of the O'Donoju, the pride of his line; the good father who was—his father!

"It's sore hard," he murmured, "but," and his eyes met theirs steadily, even the girl's eyes, and his voice rounded full and brave, "but—I shall have to bid you good night."

Disappointment, almost a sigh, passed over them. José's face darkened angrily, and he started to speak, but Don Ramon caught his wrist in a soldier's grip.

"Good night, señor," Don Ramon said to Felix, giving him his hand as he would to any guest at an ordinary time, "and," he added, "good-by. José will see you out as you came."

Felix turned, gloomily aware that with the girl it must be good-by also, but as he turned, he heard an inner door close. She

was gone. Leaden of heart he took his cloak from his host, carefully hiding his ink-stained clothes with it, and followed José out through patio, stable and corral into the narrow alley. No word passed between them and, though Don Felix meant to note the course they took, his thoughts kept him from it. And José walked so swiftly, and turned so often into narrow unlighted streets that, had he tried, he could not have remembered the way. Abruptly they came into the Plaza, where the band was playing, and people strolled round and round, or sat at ease on benches. All was drowsy southern peace.

"I leave you here," said José, giving his hand, but exacting no promise of secrecy on what had passed.

"And am I not to know who you are?"

"No."

"Nor," persisted Felix, coming to the real question that throbbed on his tongue, "who—they are?"

"I must hurry," said José, "good night."

"Now by Santiago," mused the Governor's son, gazing lugubriously after him, "there's some things where all the perversity of — can't stop a man, and this is one of them. I'll see her again. I will. I'm fair bound to!"

CHAPTER IV

THE MADMAN WITH A SABER

DON FELIX had arrived from Spain to find himself in time for his father's Anniversary Ball, which had become each year's one brightest fête in the official and fashionable life of Vera Cruz. The young Creole had congratulated himself. He loved the prettier colors, the happier refrains, the cheerier lights of existence, and helped to create them.

But His Excellency's ball was set for the second night after Don Felix's coming, and on the first night, as already seen, Don Felix had had his adventure of the pasquinade, and had met a girl—one girl, but very adequately one—so that the love of joyousness was henceforth dead in him unless it should be the joy, or hope, of seeing her again. And he might try to hope till his heart-strings cracked, and yet could not hope that she, a conspirator and rebel, would adorn the Governor's ball. Accordingly Don Felix discovered himself caring

precious little about the Governor's anniversary.

Yet many old friends of his rollicking boyhood days he met there again after three years of cloistered schooling in Salamanca, and he was glad to see them all, and in their gladness and comradeship to feel himself surely at home again. The boys, mustachioed young gallants by now, he laughed with between dances, having a cigarette of La Habana and a sparkling toast of champagne in the men's anteroom off the grand salon, and tempted their sallies for the mirthful pleasure of furbishing his wit to return them.

And the girls, old playfellows, too, these he met now in wary warfare on that jousting field of youth, the ballroom floor, while harp and viol and violin breathed the *danza's* languorous cadence. Overhead a thousand candles were a dazzling firmament. Mirrors from ceiling to wainscot made the moving *fiesta* a twinkling, ravishing acre of slender forms and vanishing ankles and alluring eyes. There were lassies there who had secretly struck their colors already, by raising them to their cheeks at the first glimpse of Don Felix with his three years added of fetching manhood. But, just because of their unacknowledged surrender, they aimed their darts the more cunningly, well aware that in this tourney the adversary demands his lovely foe's surrender only when he himself is vanquished.

Don Felix was, after the first mazurka early in the evening, convoying one of these dangerous persons back to her señora mamma, where the dowagers sat in stately duennaship, and he was bowing his thanks and turning away, when a footman in the emerald-green livery of the O'Donoju crossed the ballroom and stood, waiting at his elbow.

"What now," asked Felix, "more guests?"

The footman nodded. "It is one His Excellency your father particularly wishes you to welcome. It is the Señor Coronel Don Nemesio de Trujillo."

"Ah, so," said Don Felix; "the new Commandant of San Juan de Ulua."

The Commandant, he might have said, of the gates of Mexico, of that island fortress lying in the bay of Vera Cruz, whose dungeons were under the level of the sea.

"Not new, señor," the footman corrected him. "He has been here now two years."

"Yes, yes, while I was at school, and I

have not met him yet. Enough. I'll come and shake this Colonel Trujillo by the hand, as I've heard he shakes others by the throat."

His fingers crooked oddly for a merely formal hand-shake. The Commandant of San Juan de Ulua was next to the Governor himself in the province. He succeeded the Governor at his absence or death, and held the title of Lieutenant of the King. The Governor's son continued to crook his fingers. A Commandant of San Juan could be a very insidious enemy for a Governor of Vera Cruz.



AT THE head of the grand staircase Don Felix came upon him, with two other late arriving guests, being received by the Governor in person. But first, for his eyes, there were none other than those two other guests, one a middle-aged officer in Captain's uniform, who stood in quiet dignity, the other a girl, a slight figure in manola dress, with tiny French satin shoes, a glimpse of embroidered stocking, rich yellow skirt under a net of black, high collar flowing open, lustrous copper-brown hair, drawn from the white neck high on the head, and over it a black mantilla of finest lace, setting off gentle features and soft brown eyes in a way no man may describe or resist.

"Victoria!" cried Don Felix under his breath.

He did not know she could be so pretty as this. It was unfair. It hurt him so.

Her brown eyes opened wide on him, first unbelieving, then wondering; and then she fell upon her gloves, baring her white arms.

"I fear I am late, Your Excellency," Colonel Trujillo was saying and Felix noted the voice, harsh, fawning, which might not hide the treacherous cruelty of the man, "but the Señorita Victoria must plead for me. Our Captain of the Port, her father, would not have come, and we should have missed them both had I not gone by to remind them. Yes, and to bring them, too. Don Ramon, bear me out."

Don Ramon, he who was now attired as an officer in Spain's service, put forth a deprecating hand, but Felix saw the start of a worried frown under Colonel Trujillo's searching glance.

The Governor seemed to divine the man's discomfiture.

"We all know," he said affably, "that

Don Ramon is the hardest-worked man in the province, for not only must he collect His Majesty's customs, but watch always to thwart the guile of smugglers. How, then, can I complain that I see so little of him, and all of us must thank you, Colonel Trujillo, that you did not let him escape this time. And as for Victoria, bless me, there's many a lad in there sighing for her coming this minute. Ah, Felix, we did not see you, but here are new friends that Vera Cruz had gained while you were cutting capers off at school—Colonel Trujillo, this is my son."

For, looking on Victoria, Don Felix had not given Colonel Trujillo a glance, but now, as he turned, holding out his hand, he caught his lip sharply between his teeth. Before him stood the madman with a saber, the hard-visaged son of Mars on horseback who would have brained José except for Felix the night before.

He was now in all the panoply of the audience-chamber: braid, ruffles and sword; knee-breeches, pumps and epaulets; jeweled orders, cordon and cocked hat. Small gray eyes gleamed deep in their sockets; gleamed only furtively now in the presence of the Governor, yet always they gleamed very hungrily.

His chin was pointed, his nose slightly beaked, his brow creased in a menacing scowl. His mouth, flanked by deep twitching lines, because of the tight thin upper lip, would have been as impersonal as a dash between parentheses. Inflexible and bloodless enough that would have been, except that the lower lip—thrust forward to a point as with a fish—made it peculiarly hideous with its suggestion of overreaching lechery. An old, disgusting, senile man he might have been. A hot, insatiate, virile young man he might have been, as well. The two overlapped, one uncannily patching the other. He was not more than forty-five, a stern, sinister, truculent figure of a man.

The clean red blood of Don Felix leaped in glee, instinctively, as he remembered that he had toppled this man from his horse to the stones of the street.

"I am honored, and at your orders, Don Felix," said Trujillo. But as he faced the young man, his gaze hardened fixedly. I—I could not have seen you before, perhaps?" he questioned.

Don Felix smiled. His most winning smile it was, and far—oh, very far—from mockery. "Not unless it was since my

landing yesterday," he said, "so I suppose not, if," he added, smiling again, "you have forgotten it already."

A purplish flush slowly crossed Trujillo's face.

"A pest on my fancies!" he said in measured accents. "Of course I would have remembered. But now that I do know you, my esteemed Señor Don Felix O'Donoju, I perceive that you are not one to be forgotten once being met. I would remember, if only for your smile."

"And you would have remembered Colonel Trujillo, eh, Felix?" said the innocent old Governor. "And here are two others you could not have met, our honest, hard-working, always cheerful Don Ramon—Captain Arrellano, to be exact—and the mistress of his hospitable hermitage, his daughter Victoria. Like Colonel Trujillo, Felix, they are here from His Majesty's lost empire, Louisiana—from New Orleans, precisely speaking—though Don Ramon went there from Mexico, he being Mexican born and a —"

"We are Creoles, Your Excellency," Captain Don Ramon Arrellano added for him.

"You see, Felix," said the Governor, smiling in gentle raillery. "They are your own kind, your own people. Know them, welcome them. Prevail on them not to neglect your father so much hereafter."

"My own people," repeated the young man, grasping Don Ramon's hand, who, after a deeply penetrating glance, returned the pressure with cordial warmth.

But not so Victoria. She could not keep the trouble from her eyes, though she felt Trujillo's eyes on her the while. When Felix took her hand she gave it only mechanically, and as mechanically laid it on his arm when he begged to escort her to the ladies' retiring-room.

"The first dance, please, señorita. The next waltz, the next mazurka, the next——" he was urging, but she looked behind her. The three men were out of hearing.

"You," she interrupted, "you, the Governor's son! What—what am I to think?"

Reluctantly he brought his mind to bear on her question. He understood. She feared the Governor's son could do no less than betray what he had learned of sedition. Who might say—perhaps she thought him a spy.

"Or I? What am I to think," he demand-

ed gently, "to find you coming here with the arch foe of pasquinaders?"

"How, you mean—Trujillo?"

"Of course. He was the raging centaur who tried to brain your friend José."

"He? Oh!"

Leaning over, he saw that she was very white, and trembling.

"Now you are afraid for José," he exclaimed gloomily, "but if you think that I would—that I could—betray him to Trujillo . . . Oh, señorita!"

"He remembered *you*!" she murmured.

Her little hand, in a faint spasm, tightened on his arm.

Of a sudden life—life!—sang gloriously in his heart.

"Why," he laughed, though he could have burst his lungs for joy, "if you think that sullen-browed clod could hurt little nimble me! Oh, come, come, the dance! You shall see how light my feet will be henceforth. Only a side-step, and I'd have him sprawling again. Afraid for *me*? *You*? Oh, my——"

"Darling!" was the throbbing word, but he clamped teeth on his Irish tongue like a Spartan.



COLONEL TRUJILLO, Commandant of the island fortress of San Juan de Ulua, had hung up his sword with his cocked hat. He was a dancing-man, and would dance. But for a third time, though the music was only beginning, he stalked off the ballroom floor, the lines about his mouth twitching, the small gray eyes deep in their sockets gathering venom. Among the men in the doorways, he paused and looked back on the scene. For a while his gaze heavily followed one couple, Victoria and Felix.

It was the third time Victoria had told Trujillo that she had that dance engaged, and each time, on looking back, he had seen the young O'Donoju go to her and ardently, triumphantly claim it. A thrice surcharged state of mind needed vent. It was a bad moment for him to turn and see Victoria's father also watching Victoria, fondly, fancifully as though he were dreaming of when he had courted her mother.

Trujillo clapped him on the shoulder. The gesture seemed to others one of bluff, soldierly comradeship, but to Don Ramon the vindictive pressure of the fingers was more like an arrest for high treason.

"Eh, so, *amigo*," he whispered, "it's the Governor's son big in your eye this night? *Ai*, that doting smile. The proud father-in-law you see yourself already, eh?"

Don Ramon stiffened. The other's breath burned his ear.

"Señor Colonel," he said in a low voice, without turning his head, still looking at the dancers, and trying stoically to smile and further disarm suspicion, "I can not answer you here. Do you go first, and I will follow."

"Exactly what I wish, dear comrade," said Trujillo between his teeth. "Only, be sure to follow." Whereupon, in a voice to be overheard by those nearest, he proposed to Don Ramon that they withdraw for a cigar.

Don Ramon, accepting one from his case, nodded and went with him.

Once to themselves, in the Governor's deserted library, Don Ramon quietly and simply flung the unlighted cigar between his fingers out of the window. But, though he turned and faced Trujillo, he did not at once speak. It was tribute to the other's power for evil that Don Ramon paused to weigh his words and, while he paused, Trujillo vented what was seething within.

"The Governor's son, eh?" he fumed. "I see, a powerful protector. Powerful indeed—the green young limb of a dying oak! Powerful enough, you imagine, to shield your precious treasure from a poor Colonel's suit. Eh, my friend, I credited you with better foresight. For may not the Colonel be Governor? Think, was not the Colonel once under you, the Captain?"

"You were, indeed," said Don Ramon, "and should be yet, if there were gratitude in Spain for a Creole's faithful service. But they advanced you, a Spaniard born, over me, a Creole, and let you order me from my consulship in New Orleans, and made me follow you here to Vera Cruz so that—" the father sighed bitterly—"so that, as you yourself declare, you might continue your attentions to my daughter.

"But let me tell you now, my Colonel and superior officer, that all Spain, the Regency, the King himself if he were not Napoleon's prisoner, could not give you the right to speak of my child as you did in there to-night. Her heart's her own, not mine to give to any man, and I respect what's not mine own and, in this one case at least, I require even you to do the same.

And again, here, only a moment ago, you tried to shame me. But you know better, señor. You know that my little girl needs no other protector while her father is alive and free, and she shall dance as she pleases—aye, and wed as she pleases—and I'd say as much to the King himself, and look to him—as I do you, my Colonel—to waive his station and meet a simple Captain, man to man. Such would prove the King no coward. Are you, my Colonel?"

The Castilian in Trujillo set each proud feather on end. His hand flew to where his sword-hilt should be, but when he realized it was not there, something more hateful than clean anger grew into his look.

"A coward?" he repeated in this later mood. "Well, say that I am, since killing you would lose me Victoria. No, old man, we'll not fight, you and I. By which you will observe that I'll have her. Why, of course I'll have her!"

"I know you think so," replied Don Ramon, "by winning me preferment through your influence with the Regency, or by your threats of degradation if I do not force her to consent. But I have had the honor to tell you already that that is a waste of breath. Have the kindness, then, to guard your sullying tongue. Or I shall lay my resignation with the Governor and, as a private gentleman, either make you grant me satisfaction or brand you a coward? I believe that is all I have to say, my Colonel."

"But not I," cried Trujillo, "though what I say shall be for later. Just now, however, with your indulgence, there is an item of business. Our lax Governor fails to stamp out sedition. Pasquinades calling on the Indians to revolt are posted on his very palace gates. But tell me, what lax Captain of the Port is it who allows the types to be smuggled in from which the pasquinades are printed? It is the Inquisition that is inquiring, señor! And the new Viceroy himself, while here, was asking. Tell me, must I do your duties for you, as well as the Governor's? Must I seek out this smuggled printing-shop or will you? Aye, you're turning pale, but I'll do it, and you will seem to have repaired your laxity! There, rest easy now. You see, old friend, I'd even save your life. Pardon me, you are not smoking. A cigar?"

Again he proffered the open cigar-case. Again, though with a hand that trembled, Don Ramon took one. Trujillo waited,

watching. Don Ramon nerved himself, went to a candle and lighted the cigar. Trujillo smiled, and shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, by the way," said Don Ramon, trying to put it casually, with all his being rigidly under control, "you will permit me to perform the duties of my office myself?"

"Yes?" queried Trujillo.

"About those types, about that printing-shop—you will leave all that to me?"

"Of course, since you ask it."

"But you had it in mind. Perhaps your spies have even begun the search. Won't you help me, then, by turning over to me such clues as you may be working on?"

Trujillo did not at once reply. The restless gray eyes for once were still, fixed on the man before him.

"Or have you any clues?"

Then Trujillo spoke. "Pest! Not one. The job's a virgin, for all me. To it, Captain, and success."

CHAPTER V

MIRACLES AND POLICE ITEMS

IN THE days following the Governor's ball, Don Felix O'Donoju forgot revolution and human liberties in a new adventure, namely, man's tremendous adventure in getting himself a wife. And as is usual with a young man, he had not the slightest idea that the adventure was anything of the sort. An honorable young man's instinct drew him on without need of cogitation on motives.

He only knew that the unknown girl, met in a dark basement of sedition, had now an identity, a very possible identity. There was no reason why the son of the Governor of Vera Cruz should not call to pay his respects to the daughter of the Captain of the Port, which Don Felix hastened to do, on the very afternoon after the Anniversary Ball.

He chose the *merienda* hour, that of chocolate and *pan de dulce*, as the earliest time at which he might formally appear. He dressed with care, with loving care, in his dashing, gallant best. Plucking an oleander-blossom at the gate, he issued forth, diffident in one way, prone to blush if so much as spoken to abruptly, yet unconsciously bold in another. He would gaily have attacked a grizzly in his path,

even while he discovered himself taking short breaths as if he were a timid clerk going to fight a duel.

This purely physical discrepancy in respiration he contemplated with some curiosity. He had never known fear. And he had not been running. No, but his heart leaped as it tugged him violently towards the residence of the Captain of the Port.

His condition grew ecstatically worse as he paused before the Captain's door, then grasped the bronze knocker of eagle's talon and ball, and let it fall. The metallic clash on the ponderous door struck his ears like a gunshot.

"What a nervous lad it is!" he murmured with an inward grimace. "I imagine I'll be asking the servant for permission to pass the house, and then——"

The servant, a plump, tawny *mozo* in white blouse and tight, silver-spangled *charro* breeches, opened the door, and Felix gave his name with creditable firmness.

"Enter, Your Worship," said the man; "this way."

Felix doffed his bell-crowned Parisian beaver, passed into the *zaguán*, or vestibule, thence through a tapestried doorway on his right into the drawing-room, called the *sala*. He had an impression of a high frescoed ceiling, gilt-framed mirrors, chairs of canary satin, a large painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe, an officer's dress saber with scabbard in one corner, a guitar in another.

"Seems rather more believable than that basement of tubs and suds!" he thought.

But the plump *mozo* was speaking to him.

"Don Ramon has not yet returned from the docks," said the man. This he might have said at the outer door, except that profound training in hospitality forbade. "Has the señor perhaps a message?"

"The señorita, then," said Don Felix, and blandly seated himself.

The plump *mozo* shifted from one high red heel to the other.

"I will see," he said finally.

Don Felix heard him in the *patio* outside call a serving-woman to tell her mistress and, with a second thought, he understood the man's hesitation.

He had learned, since the night before, that Victoria's mother, like his own, was dead, and that she lived alone with her father. And her father being now absent, there was no one for duenna. He realized in

sudden embarrassment that he should have taken his leave at the *mozo's* hint. But the boldness of which he was unaware kept him sitting tight, even against the rigid conventions.

 HER first thought, when she entered and found him there, was that he had come to warn her father of some danger he had learned in the Governor's palace. That would account for his asking to see her when he could not see her father. Or perhaps, because of his knowledge of the basement conspirators, he hoped to dissuade both her father and herself from the perilous business on which they were embarked.

But nothing of the sort was in the young man's mind. Don Ramon knew his danger as well as another, and it was not for another to meddle therein. Felix had lightly passed over all complications.

The uprising would not amount to anything, he told himself, even should it ever happen. So he stifled any feeling of obligation troubling him as to telling his father of the conspiracy, as well as saved himself the pain of betraying his new friends. He did, however, give much calculation as to how he would bring them out of their predicament when the plot should be nipped in the bud. Meantime he persuaded himself that he would be as one ignorant of Don Ramon's private affairs, and regard him blissfully as a gentleman, an officer, and—the father of Victoria Arrellano.

Accordingly it gradually dawned on the señorita, when the visitor broached no particular errand, that—and she smiled a demurely maternal smile—the lad was calling on herself.

If she was confused because of her duennaless situation, so appalling to the Latin feminine mind, he had no inkling of it. She was, for all his enthralled eyes told him, as calmly self-possessed as some indulgent aunt, though so little like an aunt, unless a very young and exceedingly pretty aunt!

She bade him be seated again, and with a small, creamy hand motioned to an arm-chair which was one of two stately affairs flanking a yet statelier divan at the head of the room. He bowed, declining. If she would be seated first? She would, and settled herself on the divan, her little feet clearing the rug. She laughed softly.

"Why are you laughing?" he demanded.

What if something were awry? His neckcloth, for instance. "Why, if you please?"

"You see," she said, as he took the arm-chair, "it is not a tub of —"

"Of starch," he interrupted positively.

She gave him a quick glance of comprehension. He was letting her know that he had forgotten the tub of printer's ink and everything concerning it. He was, she understood, defining the basis of their future acquaintanceship.

She tacitly agreed. They would not talk of printer's ink, human liberty or other treasonable matters.

"But of miracles—divine miracles—one may speak of them without annoying the King, I hope?" she suddenly said.

"That one about the Virgin of Guadalupe," he suggested, for she was looking at the picture of the Virgin on the wall.

She nodded earnestly. "Yes, that was the poor Indian's miracle."

Then, like another madonna of pity, she told him the story. It was, she said, the story she loved best.

He knew the legend, as all Mexicans know it, but he listened for the sake of listening to her, of watching her, and feeling adoration deepen and deepen until there was a poignant urging within him to kneel at her feet, and let her know that he knew she was an angel, and bid her deny it if she could.

The little girl did not know what she was doing to him while she told that story. Or she had forgotten him almost, as she told of Juan Diego, neither don nor grandee, but a poor Indian, to whom the Virgin of Guadalupe had appeared, whom the Virgin spoke to and called "son."

To the poor Indian, when the *conquistadores* were torturing, slaying, enslaving, came the Virgin and bade him build her house there, her temple, where he and his were to come to her for comfort in their sorrows.

And as a token she filled his poor blanket, though it was Winter, with beautiful flowers, and these Juan took to the Bishop—the first bishop of Mexico, he was. When he poured out the flowers the Bishop could not doubt the message. He had the temple built over the place where the Virgin had stood, and placed within, over the altar, the poor Indian's blanket, framed in gold, with the Virgin's image there, always there, for the poor Indians who bring their sorrows to her.

"You see," said Victoria, lifting her big brown eyes to the painted reproduction of that blanket, "she is a Virgin entirely Mexican, and like no others; especially," she added, "not like Nuestra Señora de los Remedios who, as queen of heaven, is the patron protectress of the *conquistadores*."

Don Felix, notwithstanding the impulse to drop down on his knees and worship, smiled in tenderly loving amusement. But he did not remind her that there could be but one queen of heaven, nor that the Virgin who protected the Indians must be identically the same as she who protected the Spaniards.

Her sympathy was not all for the story. He perceived that for her it was significant of what was yet to come. Then another smile slowly touched his lips, adoringly rallying her. For, though miracles were a safe topic, this one of the Virgin of Guadalupe was her tract of revolution. Furtively she had made her argument, had bared her heart, which beat for the poor Indian whom she would see freed.

As to that, he would not bring the gloom of doubt to her hopes. The Creoles might win freedom, with the help of the Indians, but not for that would they give the Indians freedom. The Indians, after centuries becoming strong enough to cope with the whites, might win it for themselves. But hope deferred by centuries is hope deferred a long time, so he did not mention it to the little lady on the divan whose feet just cleared the rug. He loved the glow of her illusions too much for that, far too much to try to take them from her.

He was thinking, moreover, that he needed compassion as well as any Juan Diego, and would have liked to bring their discourse to a more personal trend if only to hear the sound of his name from the bright scarlet flower of her lips. Then, to his dismay, he counted the deep-toned strokes of the cathedral clock. Six of them!



"NOW by Santiago," exclaimed he to himself, "if I haven't been here half an hour! If I do not go at once, even I shall not have the countenance to follow this formal call with others. Go it is then," and heavily, sighing unheard down to his boots, he arose.

"Oh, not yet," she protested in a flurry of hospitality. "Ursula," she called, though without raising her voice.

"Yes, *niña*," came the response from the doorway. The portières moved, and a Mexican woman rose between them. She was the serving-woman, an old brown servant with a chaplet about her neck and relics on her arms. She had been sitting there on the floor the while, so conserving the exactions of duennaship.

"The chocolate, Ursula," said Victoria.

Felix did not care for chocolate, except that, like the tub of ink, it prolonged his stay. While the beverage was yet cooling in their cups, Don Ramon arrived home.

At sight of the Governor's son, Don Ramon started. His amiable features clouded over, and alarm flashed in his eyes. The Captain of the Port had been remembering his talk with Colonel Trujillo. Two questions tormented him. Did Trujillo know more than he feigned as to the printing-shop of the seditious pasquinades? If not, would he, Don Ramon, be able to excuse his not finding it himself until the date set for the revolution?

Now, with two such questions feverishly treading each on the heels of the other, and never an answer coming between, here abruptly stalked a third question. What meant this visit from the son of the Governor himself? The son of the Governor knew of that printing-shop. Was it from him that Trujillo had learned, or seemed to have learned, the source of the pasquinades?

Yes, that might be, even though it was Felix who had thrown Trujillo from his horse. For at that time Felix had just returned from Spain and did not know Trujillo from an overofficious gendarme.

If so, then the spy had come to learn more. If not, then his coming meant a warning, perhaps, of something overheard in the palace when Trujillo reported to the Governor.

Don Ramon of course was incredibly blind. He could not see in his daughter abundant explanation for a young man's presence in his house.

"Ah, Don Ramon," said Felix, rising, with his chocolate-cup in his left hand, and extending his right, "a pleasant afternoon, and let me tell you, sir, that I am calling on your daughter, if I may with your kind permission."

"Or without it, young sir, it would seem," laughed Don Ramon in relief, at the same time taking Victoria by the chin for his home-coming kiss. "Yes, Don Felix, I see

your hand. But—have you thought—do you wish to take mine?"

"I most certainly do, Don Ramon," said Felix looking him fair in the eye.

The son of the Governor had thought it out already. If he could not take Don Ramon's hand, he could not come to see Victoria. But could the Governor's son touch the hand of a traitor? Felix decided that with blithe simplicity. In his heart he found no contempt for Don Ramon. What if he were Captain of the Port, an officer of the Spanish crown? Was he not rather an officer of Mexico, and paid from Mexican taxes, while the customs he collected went not to Mexico, but to Spain?

Was it not then a finer loyalty to seek to serve them whose bread he ate rather than them who stole that bread? Thus Felix questioned himself in his refreshing logic, and that logic revealed Victoria's father a patriot. In right good will he grasped the hand of Victoria's father.

With rare delicacy Don Ramon now divided the situation aright. At least he saw that Felix came formally, almost officially, as the Governor's son, and was no more an unknown young man accepting refuge in the basement meeting-place of conspirators. The Governor's son, he perceived, had forgotten, officially, that basement, and those he had met there.

Their acquaintance was to date from the night before, when the Governor's son was presented to the Captain of the Port. The Captain of the Port could not, of course, talk with the Governor's son regarding the Creole plot to show the Spanish Governors the door. So each understood the other, very comfortably, without the need of a word to adjust their relations.

But, as Victoria had conversed on miracles, there was also no bar to the Captain of the port mentioning an item of the police news.

"*Ai*, if I had known the pleasure of this visit awaiting me!" he exclaimed in his genial way. "Yet I was delayed past my usual hour for arriving home. I happened to pass through the Executioner's Field and—cheerily, there, Victoria. There's nothing for turning pale in that—and I stopped to witness a little function."

"Father! Not an execution?"

"No, daughter mine, nothing quite that usual, yet something become usual enough of late. It was a burning at the stake."

He kept Don Felix at the tail of his eye, to note how he was taking it. "I lingered as a spectator," he added casually.

"Father!"

"Tut, tut, little goose," he laughed. "The victims were only the last batch of pasquinades torn from the walls of churches and public buildings and turned over to the Holy Inquisition. Yes, and some books—by Rousseau and such other Frenchmen—which had been found in the room of a Creole student. No, the student made no part of the bonfire. It sees he had directly vanished. *Ai, ai*, that bonfire! A very impressive function, indeed. Very august, awe-inspiring. Divine wrath itself. The Holy Inquisition. Think, the finger of God—"

"I was wondering," Don Felix interposed steadily, though very flushed of face, "if the Seville bulls will be here in time for the bull-fight Sunday."

Nevertheless, Don Ramon's police item, as covert proselyting, was more nettling to the O'Donoju blood than Victoria's miracles had been. Bull-fights seemed safe, and on that topic he took his leave.

CHAPTER VI

A SCYTHIAN WOOING

BY NO means had the young O'Donoju made his last visit to the house of the Captain of the Port. One memorable evening, slipping off alone, mentioning to no one where he was going, he met Colonel Trujillo there. Felix innocently supposed that the Commandant of the island fortress had dropped in to smoke a long black cigar with his brother officer. But Colonel Trujillo, always martial in appearance, now wore not only his officer's coat of scarlet and blue, but the Cross of Santiago and the star of the reigning house. Not so adorned would he come merely to chat with an inferior officer.

Also, though Victoria told him that her father was not at home that evening, the Colonel did not go. He sat down and, with Victoria's permission, lighted one of the black cigars alone.

Felix ardently cursed him under his breath for intruding, then he noticed that Victoria was oddly nervous. Often she did not hear what was said, and on being addressed a second time would start and bite

her lips and beg their pardon. Felix soon gave over thinking that she was embarrassed in the way that sweethearts might be embarrassed by an older third person. Something else was on her mind.

The boy was far from suspecting that the grim, swarthy, evil-featured Commandant, of years almost equal to her father's, had hopes of her on his own account. Yet even that would not altogether have explained the girl's tense, abstracted manner. And, by thinking hard—for anything that so concerned her was anxiety itself to him—suddenly he hit the true solution.

The solution was this: her father was at home. He was in the house, but down in that basement room, at a meeting of the *Pozoteros*, plotting revolution, printing incendiary lampoons, perhaps loading muskets with powder and shot. Felix knew that the Vera Cruz revolutionists gathered there.

Once before, when visiting in the *sala* with Victoria, he had heard voices in debate. The voices had come from below. He had glanced at Victoria, and her face told him again what, officially, he had forgotten.

Now, with Trujillo also here, what if that strident note of argument should again arise from below-stairs? Little wonder, thought Felix, that her poor nerves were drawn to breaking. His own nerves were quickly in the same state. He talked and talked, and squirmed when he had to listen to Trujillo, for Trujillo talked calmly, suavely, his voice rasping on a low key, and Felix listened the while, fearing to hear the sounds from below.

The least of them would bring a question to Trujillo's mind, if not to his tongue, and the life of Victoria's father would likely answer for it. A yearning grew to acute pain. Since Trujillo stayed on and on, Felix yearned to hoist him out, boots, sword and cocked hat.

Trujillo was unctuously pleasant. He modulated that rasp in his voice. His lips were always smiling, though both young people ever had the feeling that his eyes were not. When either of them spoke he flattered them by the urbanely deferential eagerness with which he accorded their remarks.

He even ventured, in the rôle of a gallant and sympathetic old soldier, to tease them a sly bit on their obvious sweethearting, though Victoria had not the heart to blush and Felix scarcely heard him. Felix had

oddly got the uncomfortable impression by now that the man was waiting—waiting for something. But what?

At last Victoria arose, her knees trembling under her.

"How very stupid of me," she exclaimed, her voice fluttering as she tried to steady it, "but I know, señor, that you like a—a *copila* of cognac. With your permission! Ursula does not know where father keeps it."

She started for the door, all but panting to be away, when Trujillo rose before her, earnestly protesting. She was not to give herself that trouble. No, never, not for him. He would not touch cognac except in his coffee after a hearty dinner. Would she do him the favor? and, smiling, he waved his hand towards the divan she had just left.

"*Ai*, but I do," said Felix quickly, "and I require no banquet first to relish a swallow. Though, like you, my Colonel, not for worlds would I give our hostess so much trouble."

"It's no trouble—no trouble," cried Victoria, eagerly. "Wait. I shall be but a little minute."

Force only could have stopped her then. Trujillo surveyed Felix pensively for a moment and, shrugging slightly, went to a candle and relighted his cigar.

"Now she will warn them, those foolish citizens down there in the basement," thought Felix.



TRUJILLO did not resume his seat. He did not speak. He was intent on examining the glowing end of his cigar and, not satisfied, again bent over the candle. There was silence in the room, throughout the house. Felix listened tensely. He felt that Trujillo was listening too.

A voice:

"If you do, we shall have to shoot!"

The voice was muffled, as if from within the earth.

Felix glanced sharply at Trujillo. Trujillo was still bending over the candle. He was calmly drawing the flame into his cigar. Felix leisurely got to his feet. His eyes sped about the room, and they rested on the officer's saber in one corner—Don Ramon's dress sword, with its tassel and belt, now an ornament and memento of his soldiering youth.

From below, as if answering the threat to shoot, they heard muffled sounds. The sounds were deadened thuds, as of a beam-end rammed against heavy wooden doors. A crash followed.

Then sudden yells arose, and the stifled din of musket-shots.

A woman shrieked, a door opened and panic-stricken footsteps across the *patio* were coming nearer.

"It's Victoria," Felix moaned, "Victorial!"

But at that moment Trujillo straightened, turned and clasped him on the shoulder.

"Your father will glory in you for this, my boy," he announced solemnly, distinctly. "What you told us was true. Thanks to you, we have bagged the nest of traitors."

Utterly dumfounded, Felix saw Victoria in the doorway, and from the horror on her face he knew that she had heard.

As white as marble, he reached for Trujillo's throat.

"You will tell her that you lie," he said. "Tell her, I say! Tell her!"

Her gaze fluttered piteously from one to the other, dazed and questioning, though instantly the first terror came into the distended brown eyes as cries and hoarse curses rose from the tumult below. But they died quickly, those cries, as if those who uttered them were struck down.

Several men were heard laboriously mounting the steps, and Don Ramon was led in between two excited, disheveled gendarmes.

His tattered shirt was freshly wet in blood, yet most tragic of all was the horror manifest in his drawn features and drooping head. With a sob Victoria ran to him, and had her arms about his neck, and drew his head to her shoulder.

Trujillo's knitted brows concentrated on the two gendarmes.

"All have been overpowered below?" he demanded.

"All, my Colonel," said one, touching his glazed cap.

"And carried off to prison?"

"Except those who were killed, my Colonel. Everything was done as your worship ordered."

"To be sure it was. Now to the front door, both of you. Wait outside and, if I call, take care that you hear me."

They loosed their clutches on Don Ramon's arms, and obeyed.

Trujillo waited until they were out of range of voices at an ordinary pitch, and during yet another minute he waited. His small gray eyes taking fire, his bloodless upper lip tightening against the gums, he contemplated his prisoner, the girl and the Governor's son. Evidently the real business of the evening was before him.



"EH, MY esteemed comrade," he began, addressing the wounded Don Ramon, "so you waited for me to uncover the seditious printing-shop after all, it seems? Vain, blinded man, did you imagine then that Don Felix here would keep your secret? That he would allow his father to be overthrown, and all his chances in life ruined? Too late, too late. I tried to warn you, that night of His Excellency's ball, when I detected you looking higher than poor Trujillo's head for a son-in-law. Who seems the worthier to you now, and to the fair Victoria? Or do you still prefer the spy, though a Governor's son?"

The same dazed, questioning look came in Don Ramon's eyes as had been seen in Victoria's, but to hers it did not come again.

"Do not believe him, father," she pleaded. "Do not believe him. Don Felix would not, could not——"

"Thank you for that, Victoria," cried Felix.

"Careful, young sir, careful," interposed Trujillo. "Say you did not denounce the plot, then you are attainted with treason yourself, for you had knowledge of it!"

"I only know," Felix retorted hotly, "that one evening I toppled a certain ruffian from his horse. That ruffian may have followed me to the refuge of a certain basement, or seen me coming out again, and so decided that the basement hived conspirators, and that I was in the thick of it. Tell me, Colonel Trujillo, was it not this certain ruffian who told you, and not I?"

"Pest!" said Trujillo. "The lad's ingenious! But, after all, it's immaterial, one man's word against another's, from which Don Ramon may now, this evening, pick his son-in-law. Or perhaps the lady herself will deign to choose. Choose, if you will, one who paid his suit to the daughter while he sprang the trap—with my aid, of course—on the father. Or choose the other, a simple officer who honestly did his duty."

Victoria looked up, with burning cheeks.

"Why," she cried, "why should I choose at all?"

"Because," said Trujillo, his fishlike under lip thrusting forward thirstily, "we have not yet searched the basement, nor the house. We have not yet a scrap of paper, a smuggled type, a jot of evidence. Would it not be well, my lady, to choose before I order the search?"

"By my life, no!" cried Don Ramon, freeing himself from Victoria's arms and from Felix's, who was bandaging the wounded shoulder with his own handkerchief. "I think you are forgetting that honest duty you spoke of, sir. Search, and prove me a traitor. Let me be shot as one. Put my head on the highest flagstaff in the city. But——"

Victoria laid a moist and feverish hand over his mouth.

"Don't, don't," she pleaded.

She faced Trujillo.

"You mean that you would save my father's life——"

"Naturally," interposed Trujillo, "and the other prisoners too, since, without a search, there would be no evidence against them."

"Then," said Victoria, feeling Felix's eyes on her, and dropping her own, "I——"

"Silence!" Her father threw off her hand, her arms. He advanced a step towards Trujillo.

"To your honest duty, sir," he said, bowing ceremoniously.

Trujillo smiled. He had expected as much. He knew that Don Ramon would not buy life so basely. Accordingly he was prepared.

"We may be overlooking one point," he suggested. "Suppose this impending search brings treason home to the daughter as well as to the father? In such grim business, you know, His Majesty's courts recognize no sex. Attainted beauty fares precisely the same."

Felix stiffened where he stood. Victoria to the gallows? Would the search touch the daughter? A groan from Don Ramon told him that it would. Now it came over the young man, O'Donoju, that his was the arm to strike. His only.



HE HAD no doubt that he would strike. But how to do it adequately? The Irishman in him, at the first hint of trouble, had sought out the means for bidding in his share. His eyes

rested on Don Ramon's saber in the corner, and a smile—a strangely inexplicable smile—broke frigidly upon his lips. There was something to look forward to, something exhilarating and very imminent! The blue-eyed slayer of Moors of the olden time would have loved Don Felix now as his own son.

The deep lines about Trujillo's mouth twitched.

"Well, well, my capricious darling," he said, "you call it a bargain, eh? I thought you would, and your father, too. Now to seal it. Come."

His bland calm vanished. With both hands he took her about the waist.

Don Ramon raised his arm. His clenched fist trembled in the air. But Felix had struck already. His fist caught Trujillo in the jaw.

Trujillo reeled under the blow, his hands freeing the girl's waist. He jerked his saber from its scabbard, and lunged at his assailant.

Felix leaped back to the wall and stood apparently cornered, his arms hanging behind him.

Trujillo paused. "Eh? You surrender?"

Felix shook his head. The smile was still on his lips.

"I do not wish to kill a defenseless man," said Trujillo.

"Was it that which kept you from sabering a fallen man in the street?"

"Pest! Since you make me kill you——"

But as he lunged this second time Felix darted to one side and, from behind him, brought Don Ramon's saber. With his leap aside it came unsheathed in his hand, and flashed under Trujillo's misdirected stroke.

"To me! Help! Help!" yelled Trujillo, as he went down from the wound Felix gave him.

"Good, good!" laughed Felix, confronting the two gendarmes as they ran in. "Exactly what I wanted, Don Ramon!" he shouted. "Be ready, Don Ramon. I'm going to chop a path through them for you and Victoria. Look sharp, now. I've begun."

"Shoot him, you fools! Shoot him!" roared Trujillo.

"As green grows the grass," chanted Felix. "For you, *mon petit*. And——"

The gendarmes fired their muskets, then their pistols. The room was dense with

smoke, all but smothering the one candle remaining lighted. Felix's restless point took the nearest gendarme, and to the next he went, crouching low. He again reached home but, with his announcement of it, he himself went down, felled like an ox by the butt of the man's musket.

Victoria did not see him fall. Her father was urging her through the doorway; was pressing her closely. But as she stepped over the two bodies into the hall, yet one more pistol-shot rang out behind her. She gained the front door alone and opened it. The street was dark. The world was silent.

"Hurry, father," she called softly.

"Go," she heard his voice. "I am coming. I'll meet you——"

She thought there was something strange in this. She started back, to help her father, when out of the *sala* doorway, between the tapestries, Trujillo dragged himself, a smoking pistol in his hand.

"Stop!" he gasped, aiming it at her.

She turned then and fled into the street.

She did not know that the pistol-shot fired by Trujillo had taken her father's life, which had ebbed even as he called to her that he was coming.

CHAPTER VII

THE AFTERMATH

FROM her great gilt frame the Virgin of Guadalupe, her hands together on her breast in prayer, looked down through fumes of gunpowder on bleeding, prostrate men, and on one, bloodier than the rest, who dragged himself back into the room, still holding a smoking revolver. It was Trujillo, who had just seen escape the girl for whom he had provoked all this murder.

Catching the draperies in the doorway he pulled himself in, and crawled along the floor until he gained the table, where he reached for the lone candle that was yet burning. With it he knelt over the two gendarmes, hoping that one might be alive, and perhaps revive enough to go for help and start the pursuit after Victoria.

Under the yellow flickering their fallow faces were waxen. Both were dead. So also was Don Ramon.

Besides the two gendarmes and Don Ramon there was one other senseless form. It was of him who had worked so much frustration of his veteran guile by simple

youthful impulse. Trujillo held the candle close over the face of this one. He was breathing yet, though the wavy hair was matted thick in blood.

Trujillo's eyes lingered over the features, which pallor had turned into delicately veined marble. Yet it was neither hate nor impotent chagrin that settled over Trujillo's camp-weathered, evil face, though he reflected on how adequately the young O'Donoju had performed; how he had matched the older suitor's trickery with uncalculating loyalty to his love.

And he had saved her! Yet it was not hate that held Trujillo gazing on the youth's bloodless face.

By his own loss of blood, all that was oily, spiced and profligate in it seemed to have been cleansed from his veins. A yearning, proper to the humility of recognized defeat, was in the intentness of his gaze. Had he but owned the young conqueror's weapon—not youth, not beauty, but honest nobility—the odds would not have been, nor would yet be, so heavy against him. As a fighter, fighting by craft, he admired and envied this superior weapon of his adversary, contemplating it in a sorrow of despair, knowing it to be a Saint Michael's, inexorably beyond his reach.

There, as he gazed, imperceptibly he lapsed into unconsciousness, and his eyes closed even as Felix moaned and opened his.

Felix knitted his brow, fighting back darts of pain that shot through his head. He was hazily angry, ashamed. He had been inadvertent the night before; a carouse, perhaps. But it was still night. A flickering light on the floor near him roused sluggish pulsations of shadow in the silent, half-lighted room. His eyes steadied, and gazed at the ceiling. The dim frescoing up there took forms and colors, and grew stridently eloquent to his memory.

He half grinned. It had been a fight. Yes, a fight, and not excess of jollity. But——

He hitched his elbow under him and, though the stab of pain dazed him, got his head from the rug. No, she was not there. Swiftly he accounted for those who might have pursued her. They were three inert bodies. She had escaped.

"I never enjoyed agony more," he murmured, dropping his head to the floor between his hands. "Oh, little maid, if you

had not gotten away—o-ooh, how it hurts!"

He lay gathering fortitude to endure more of the pain, and he seemed to remember that there had been a fourth form, almost in the doorway. That would be Don Ramon, he thought.

As he could, by relays of will against torture, he pulled himself towards the doorway. At last, stretching forth his hand, he could lay his palm over Don Ramon's heart. It was still. The breast was growing cold.

"Now, curse me for it, but I hope the others are colder!"

And so the two gendarmes were; as he found in his dreary, costly journey over inches of the rug's sticky nap. But Trujillo? Trujillo was breathing yet.

"——!" Felix moaned, "It's not right! It's not right!"

But he found the wound under the right arm, and he stanching it with bandages torn from his shirt.

"Now I'll—I'll have to get him help."

He rested a space, then pulled himself up by the table leg, and for another space lay across the table, face downward, his arms rigid and his fists clenched.

"But," he thought, "he'll start a pack of other hounds after Victoria."

And what would be Victoria's fate if she were overtaken? He recalled Trujillo's threat to search the house, and her father's groan at the threat. And those conspirators captured in the basement, now in prison? The evidence were death to them.

"My esteemed hyena," Felix feebly addressed the senseless yet breathing form on the rug under him, "you'll have to wait. *Adi, yes, señor*, till I've drawn a fang or two."



FIRST, clinging to the table, he braced himself upright on his feet.

Next he staggered toward the wall, lurching against it. He followed the wall, pausing often. He gained the doorway and staggered to the steps into the basement. He sat on the top step, and so let himself down, one by one. He reeled into the place of tubs where he had first met Victoria.

Tubs and benches were overturned. Dead bodies were strewn among them. The outer door lay splintered where it had been battered open. The contraband printer's ink puddled the floor. Manila paper

and forbidden type used for printing pasquinades littered the room. An iron-bound chest had been pried open and rifled of its contents. Felix leaned against the wall, despairing.

"I'm too simple," he murmured, twisting a wry face. "Of course Trujillo was lying. I see it now! He threatened to make the search, and force Victoria to give herself to him for not making it. The dog proposed to have Victoria and his victims too. Of course, of course; for, look, the search had been made when he was threatening to make it. His soldiers had already bundled off all the evidence for him."

Painfully Felix verified this theory by a tour of the house. Every room, chest and drawer had been ransacked. He returned to the *sala*, to the unconscious Trujillo there. He would force the trickster to his senses, if he could, and then wring from him a written order on the Commandant of the barracks for the whole mass of evidence, or else—— But Felix did not allow himself to question yet if he could kill a wounded, helpless man.

In the dining-room he had picked up a half filled carafe of cognac, which he took with him to the *sala*. On his knees he was bathing Trujillo's forehead with the liquor, when he heard the ringing of hoofs on cobblestones. He raised his head. The clatter grew nearer. They were in the street below. There were men's voices and the jangling of sabers. Before he could rise, the front door burst open, and the room filled with lancers bearing torches.

"Poor Trujillo!" exclaimed their officer. "For all his orders we should not have left him after the raid below. We should not have waited for him at the barracks. And now he is——"

"But here is one of the traitors alive!" cried a sergeant.

Gauntleted hands brought Felix to his feet. Torches were thrust in his face.

"Oh-ho," cried the officer, "it's my laughing pasquinader! At the church door, remember? Now let's laugh some more, for surely is it a fine joke to kill our Colonel. Laugh, I say. Another tickler for you!"

Once, twice, the man's gauntlet brought a million needle-points to Felix's cheek.

"When I do laugh," Felix sobbed between his teeth, "When I do, then——"

"Kill him now, my lieutenant," clamored several of the lancers.

"Fore God, and that's a fine joke too," cried the officer, snatching out his saber.

"Not yet." The voice was at their feet.

"It's the Colonel. It's Trujillo!" they cried. "*Ai, ai*, my Colonel, you are not dead!"

Trujillo cursed faintly. The troopers lifted him to the divan.

"Surgeons—a carriage," he whispered. "For him—" he indicated Felix in a bitter scowl— "San Lazaro, the darkest cell! And—and there was something else— Pest! The girl! She has escaped. After her, imbeciles, after her!"



DON FELIX O'DONOJU, son of a Spanish governor, pondered somewhat on the rights of man and the intimate application of the new ideas, as he was partly dragged, partly shunted into a black, evil-smelling void, a bolt shot in its lock, and the jailor's lantern with the jailor's receding footsteps lost somewhere in the world outside this moist dungeon.

"Yet the rats like it," he thought, as he felt them race against his ankles. "Foolish vermin— Oh, how my head does hurt!"

He groped about him for a couch, and his hand touched a slimy wall. His toe caught in something and he fell. It was a pallet of husks, bursting from its sacking. He lay there as he had fallen, and let his weary body relax. But a stench began to sicken him, and he rolled from the husks upon the damp stones. His senses left him then and he slept, though moaning low and often crying out, until a filthy gray seeped into the hole and he knew it was morning. A turnkey had aroused him.

Felix sat up, propping himself by one arm to the floor.

"You there, what's new?" he demanded. "What's the news of Trujillo's chase after the poor girl? Have they—"

The turnkey shook his head. "I bring only these," he said, putting an earthen saucer of moldy *tortillas* and a *botellon* of water on the floor beside the prisoner.

Felix sniffed at them wrathfully. He had expected to breakfast in the Governor's palace. His father would surely have him out and in his own custody as soon as informed of last night's affair by Trujillo. He supposed the turnkey the bearer of an order of release. But those *tortillas*?

"I say, you," he commanded, "tell me who I am."

"Number Forty-seven," said the man.

"My name, I mean?"

Again the turnkey shook his head. He was now in the corridor, and was locking the grating behind him.

"Then I'll tell you," cried Felix, "and you will straight with it to His Excellency the Governor. Say to His Excellency that Felix O'Donoju sends his compliments from San Lazaro."

The man turned to go without a word. But he hesitated, then thrust his nose between the bars.

"Don Felix you may be," he said, lowering his voice till it was a hoarse whisper, "and I am after no lashes from Excellencies. So Number Forty-seven, or Don Felix, I will tell you this. It is that the Señor Colonel Trujillo has guards outside. They are there, he says, in case of attempted rescue of the other prisoners taken last night. But, for all that, these guards will not let any of us leave the prison. What, then, can I do? I can only give your message to the Señor Jailor, who will perhaps give it to the Señor Colonel."

"No," said Felix, "you need not, for I now perceive that you would waste much breath. Yet wait. Yes, I have another message. You may tell your Señor Colonel that he owes me a shirt. What? Yes; a shirt. You observe that mine is all ribbons. Merely remind him that he owes me a shirt, nothing more."

"Nothing more," repeated Felix to himself, "but it is his life, his life that he owes me; for the shirt that kept him from bleeding to death last night. He will understand and, if there is a spark of Spaniard in him, he will let no such obligation to an enemy go unpaid. At least—at least, I am giving him the chance."

The chivalrous young fellow was not without shame in reminding anybody of an obligation, but the thought of his father's anxiety, and of Victoria's plight if she were taken, sundered the hair-like scruple.

That night the turnkey brought him, with the Señor Colonel Trujillo's sentiments of distinguished consideration—a shirt.

Felix drew away from the package with disgust. "You keep it," he said to the man.

For days and nights he lay there, his torn clothes becoming filthy rags, the wound in his head festering and corrupt, and he recalled the word "rotting" as applied to human beings. He had poignantly thought

of it before, but he knew now that one of God's creatures was rotting, beyond help of friends, and would rot, unless his enemies chose to give him justice and a trial. He had gone forth a-courting, and one goes on that errand shyly. He had not mentioned to a soul where he was going, and so here he was, vanished out of the world, and none but his enemy knew where.

If such could be true of a Governor's son, it was then a condition throughout Spain's dominions; an agony actually endured by many, and actually possible to all. If men were men, why did they endure it? Aye, but did they still? In his half-raving, writhing before his constant vision of his old father's torturing grief, of Victoria's peril, of his own helplessness, he remembered in a flash how men were ceasing to endure it, by revolution, by terror. The New Ideas? Ugh! The might of men was the thing, not academic novelties of debate! The sword. The guillotine. Ten million mailed fists. He clenched his own.

"When I get out! When I get out!" he whispered softly, caressing, to himself.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CLOAKED STRANGER

ALL that Felix had pictured of his father's distress was true. Just as Felix implored vainly for the breath of a word from the outside world, or to send one forth, if only that he was alive, so the Governor in his palace had no word from his boy's dungeon, not a dozen stones' throw away. The earth had opened, and his son had vanished.

By day the Governor walked the floor, stopping at his desk when necessary to sign papers brought to him, as, for example, for the trial of the prisoners taken in the raid on Don Ramon, one of whom was marked "Unidentified—name not known."

The trial was set for a week ahead, when it was thought that Trujillo would be recovered sufficiently to give his testimony. The first news of the raid, with the revelation that such a one as Don Ramon was steeped in treason, had stunned the Governor, and left an ominous chill about his heart. But even that passed from his mind when Felix still did not happen in with his cheery jesting, and when all search turned up no hint of where he had gone. Then the

Governor, aged by frenzy and looking on his bed with horror at the thought of sleep, took to that bed when anguish could no longer goad him on.



THE night which was the eve of the trial came, though of that the sick Governor was not thinking at all, except that he had resolved to grasp any pretext for clemency after Trujillo's bloody raid. Again and again he was telling himself that Felix must be dead, and trying to picture how his boy looked in death, and so force the relieving pain of it, when in the silent night he heard a carriage draw up under the palace windows. A man's voice was rousing the sentry at the gate.

"If it's Felix!" cried the Governor.

He pushed back the pillows under him, trying to rise.

The nurse and physician hastened to him, and laid soothing, restraining hands on him.

The Governor shook his head imperiously. He pointed a restraining finger at his chamber door.

"Quick. Some one is knocking. Perhaps Felix——"

It was the officer of the guard. A man below, he said, wished to speak with His Excellency.

"Who is he?" demanded the physician.

"He would not give his name."

"What's his business at such an hour?"

"Good news for His Excellency. That is all he would——"

"Bring him," cried the Governor. "Call him. Do not wait."

The man was a stranger to them all. Moreover, in the dimly lighted bedroom, kept his cloak well over the lower part of his face, but this was no unusual thing when one feared a cold from the damp night air.

The Governor's eyes steadied on the stranger in a fevered hope. "If it's about Felix——"

It seemed that the man nodded "Yes," but one could not be sure.

"Is he alive? Is he——"

"Your Excellency——" The cloaked stranger spoke at last, but stopped, being taken with a deep cavernous cough. "Your Excellency, there goes the peril of my life with what I have come to reveal, and if any one——" He stifled the cough under the cloak about his mouth. "If any one——" His eyes shifted to the physician, nurse and

officer of the guard, who were in the room.

The Governor's hand fluttered from the coverlet in an impatient gesture.

"The favor, you three," he said; "leave us."

The physician, moved by curiosity as much as by the patient's welfare, began to protest.

"Sergeant," cried the gentle, white-haired Governor in his anger to the officer of the guard, "put them out, these two, and yourself with them. Go!"

The sergeant advanced at salute, wheeled, facing the door, and the physician and nurse went out before him.

"Now," said the Governor when the door closed on them, "now, now! Felix, he is alive?"

"I—believe so," replied the cloaked stranger.

"You believe so? Why did you come here? What have you to tell me? Alive or dead, where is he?"

"In San Lazaro."

"In——" The Governor's fingers closed over the coverlet. "My boy in San Lazaro? Who dared——"

"Who dared?" echoed the stranger. "Who but the man who would have me there too, if he learns that I have told."

The Governor sat up gasping. "His name?" he cried. "His name? Man, this is too much like the cat's play with the crippled mouse. His name, or by our Lord in heaven I'll——"

The stranger put out a deprecating hand from his cloak. Something of the craven before this helpless sick man betrayed itself in the gesture. "I was meaning to tell Your Excellency. I came to tell——"

"His name?"

"Colonel Trujillo, Your Excellency."

"Oh," said the Governor, falling back to the pillows, "there is some mistake. Colonel Trujillo could not have known who his prisoner was!"

"Doubtless not," interposed the stranger, but the Governor thought he detected irony now in the hoarse cough. "But——"

"But," the Governor ordered curtly, "if you come to me here as a friend, you will, señor, tell me what your errand is. Quickly man, what is it?"

"I only know," said the stranger, "that the night of the raid on Don Ramon's—as it happened, shortly after the raid—I was by chance passing the house on my

way home. There was a carriage at the door, and the horses of soldiers, of our lancers. The door was open and, as I stepped back into the shadow, I saw Colonel Trujillo carried out, wounded but cursing out his orders, and put in the carriage."

"That is all known to me," protested the Governor.

"But directly," said the stranger, "I saw some one else carried out, a prisoner. They had him on a stretcher, such as is used for violent criminals, and he was strapped down to the boards. By the light of the torches I saw his face. I had seen your son, Don Felix. This prisoner was Don Felix. I followed them to San Lazaro, and saw him taken in there."

"'Tis clear enough," said the Governor in blessed relief, "and I'll have him out at once. Trujillo, you see, was wounded. He did not know it was Felix. Nor did the lancers. Poor boy, he used to visit at Don Ramon's. I see; I see; and he happened to be there the night of the raid, never knowing that traitors were meeting in the same house until he himself was seized as one of them. I remember now. One of the prisoners is given as unknown, unidentified. Felix, Felix, for some impulsive reason he has not declared his name! Oh, but we'll have you out this night, foolish boy, and to-morrow you shall satisfy your judges at the trial! Friend, on my desk there—paper, ink."

"How deeply I regret," murmured this friend, bringing the ink and paper, "how deeply, indeed, that I could not come sooner."

"Eh, so," exclaimed the Governor, eying him sharply, "and why did you not, pray?"

"Because," said the man, "I supposed of course that Don Felix was restored to you at once."

"What, when the province has been combed through for him the week past?"

"Your Excellency," said the stranger meekly, "perceives my affliction. A racking cough, is it not? A cursed cough, since it has kept Don Felix in prison and brought you to your bed. But I will explain. That night of the raid laid me indoors with a cold, and only to-night my doctor happened to mention Your Excellency's illness, and the cause of it. 'What,' I cried, though only to myself, for one is careful about meddling where Trujillo is concerned, 'what,' I cried.

"His Excellency does not know that his son is in San Lazaro?" Then, as soon as the *medico* left, I leaped from my bed, dressed, and am here."

"And we'll thank you for it later," declared the Governor, "But meantime here's the order for the instant transfer of the poor unidentified one to his father's arms. I'll take it myself. My valet, please. Call him from the door."

The stranger turned to obey, or seemed to, but paused.

"Would Your Excellency allow me to make a plea for the other poor wretches taken by Trujillo that same night?"

"Assuredly," said the Governor, "but not now, not when——"

"Yes, now," persisted the man. "Less fortunate than the Governor's son, they may not be able to explain their presence at Don Ramon's. They will have much need of mercy, and of a merciful judge."

"And will they not find one in me? You are a stranger, indeed, señor. Now call my valet."

"Wait, one word more," pleaded the other. "Your Excellency forgets that in the joy of finding your son, you may be selfish. You are forgetting these fellow prisoners of his whose fate——"

"I do not understand how——"

"Hear me then. The trial is to-morrow. You leave your bed to-night a sick man. Doing that, you may have to keep it to-morrow. What then? Then," said the man, "Trujillo will preside at the trial, and to the last wretch, your son excepted, he'll have them out and shot. Ah, Your Excellency," the stranger went on, "you spoke of thanking me later. Thank me now by preserving yourself for mercy at the trial to-morrow."

The Governor sank back on his pillows. The Cathedral clock gave forth the hour, and on the stroke a night policeman's whistle rose in the street below, and that was answered by another in the Plaza, and that by a third yet more distant, and so the relay went, dying faint and thin in the far quarters of the city.

"All's well," sighed the weary Governor, "but it would not be could I slight an obligation. Call the sergeant of the guard señor, and not my valet."

When the sergeant came he was ordered to rouse the Governor's aide at once, and order horses harnessed to a carriage.

"If I might suggest," interposed the stranger, "my carriage is at the door. Let Your Excellency's messenger use that, and save——"

"And save five minutes," exclaimed the Governor. "Thank you, friend, for each minute less of San Lazaro for Felix. You increase my obligation, sir, but I accept."

The aide, a young Spaniard, came at the Governor's urgent summons.

"And lose no time," said the Governor, handing him an order on the jailor of San Lazaro for one unidentified prisoner, taken in the raid on Don Ramon's. "This gentleman will take you in his carriage. Go, and remember that I am counting every breath until you bring me Felix."

CHAPTER IX

FELIX ASKS A QUESTION

THE Governor's aide was not a deeply penetrating young man, and whatever may have mystified him in his cloaked guide of the sepulchral cough yet disturbed him only vaguely. He glanced at the stranger curiously as they hastened down the stairs and entered the carriage outside. A footman in sombrero and *charro* dress slammed the door behind them, and leaped over the wheel to the box beside the driver. The lash cracked and the horses sprang away at a swift trot.

As they clattered past the Plaza the aide heard hoof-beats behind, and looking out he saw that a horseman, cloaked, booted and spurred, was following them.

"A friend," explained the stranger briefly. "He came with me but waited outside."

The Governor's aide, though without deep penetration, yet had curiosity, the same not being moderated by that sense of delicacy which had restrained the Governor.

"Who is he?" he asked. "And you, señor, who are you? Who are you both?"

"Did His Excellency perhaps instruct you to inquire?"

"No, I——"

"Then," interrupted the man, "may it not be more discreet to leave the question of my identity with His Excellency?"

The aide fell silent, properly abashed. The Governor was using him in a secret business, and here already he had clumsily inserted his nose where he had no right. He hoped the stranger would not mention

it to the Governor, but after thinking in vain how he could make the request gracefully, he changed the subject.

"Bless me," he exclaimed amiably, "the policeman at this corner must be asleep. I do not see his lantern."

But the stranger was not discursive. A few minutes more they drew up before the dull walls of San Lazaro.

The jailor was summoned.

"A command from His Excellency, the Governor," went the word that drew him from his cot like a halter.

The aide produced the order for the prisoner, charged with treason, name unknown. The jailor read it under the turnkey's lantern. He looked from it to the aide, from the aide to the cloaked stranger.

"I," he faltered, "I have orders—that is, the Señor Colonel Trujillo——"

"A moment," interposed the stranger. He was frowning heavily on the jailor, and the jailor's perplexity increased. Then, without another word, the stranger turned and stepped outside into the street. The bewildered jailor followed. The aide saw, as the door opened and closed, the horseman at the curb. He stepped to the door, opened it a hand's breadth and peered out. The horseman was bending from the saddle close to the jailor's ear. The aide could not hear, but the horseman could not have said half a dozen words when the jailor handed up to the horseman the Governor's order, still in his hand, and hastened back into the prison, followed by the cloaked stranger of the carriage. The aide jumped back from the doorway as the two entered.

"Wait here," said the jailor, and taking the lantern and keys he vanished into the prison's dark labyrinth.

"So only he brings Don Felix," thought the aide, "it must be all right. Yes, yes, it must be all right."

 THE jailor did bring Don Felix, tattered, unkempt, filthy, but with a savagery in his feeble tread and a dangerous fire in his blinking eyes. His wan features lighted joyfully at sight of the Governor's aide.

"My father?" he demanded. "No, do not touch my hand, but give me first the Gulf to wallow in. How clean you look! Bathing then is still the fashion. Now about my father——"

"He sent me for you," replied the aide. "He did not know till to-night that you——"

"Why to be sure he did not. But come——come!"

He led the way himself. Bursting open the door he saw the carriage and jumped in. The aide followed and, after him, the cloaked stranger.

"Eh, who's this?" asked Felix.

"You'll have to ask him," shouted the aide above the thumping of the wheels.

"I will," said Felix, "but first who's that horseman alongside? The Saints! Look behind us. There, on the walk, in the shadow, a dozen men at least running after. Santiago, there's more of them! They're darting into the street from every corner as soon as we pass. Hard to see them though the city's so dark to-night. There's not even a policeman's lantern. I——"

"Hold, there!" yelled the aide suddenly, rapping on the glass to the coachman, "This is not the way. Turn to the——"

The man lashed his horses the harder.

"Have you your pistols?" Felix shouted into the aide's ear.

"No, I——"

"Then hold our unknown friend there. 'I'll have his.'"

"Do not try it, señores," spoke the cloaked stranger calmly. "My pistols are both trained on you now."

Instantly Felix threw himself on the man, striking up the pistols. A bullet grazed his arm and ranged through the top of the carriage.

The coachman screeched as if stung, threw up his hands reeled and rolled off the box. The footman caught at the reins, but missed them, and the horses reared and plunged. The mounted stranger, racing for their heads, clutched the bit of one of them, and brought the beast to his haunches. But the violent effort told on him. "Pest!" With a bitter oath he clutched at his right side and swayed drunkenly.

"You fool," cried Felix to the aide, "that's Trujillo on that horse! Help me with this fellow. I'm growing weak. How now, what——"

The pursuing shadows were crowding around. They seized the coach-horses, swarmed over the wheels, overpowered the footman and threw him to the pavement. They did the same for the unknown horseman. They pulled Trujillo from his

saddle and one of them mounted his horse.

Others threw open the carriage door, dragged out the cloaked stranger, then the aide, and when Felix thought they would have him out too, the doors were slammed shut. Again the carriage swayed and leaped over the stones.

"Trujillo first! Then robbers!" thought Felix. "Heigh!" he yelled, pounding the window, "heigh, drop me out too! Slow up a bit!"

A hand pulled him back into the carriage. Beside him sat one of the assaulting mob.

"Now, by Santiago——"

"You are the one we came for, Don Felix," said the man. "You may remember me. My name is José."

"Save us!" exclaimed Felix, "and is this more pasquinading, for an instance?"

CHAPTER X

THE O'DONOJU FIGHTING BLOOD

"PASQUINADING?" repeated the earnest young revolutionist, whom Felix knew as yet by no other name than simple "José."

"No, no, we are to the sequel of pasquinades now, señor. First, Spain made her reply to them. How? By butchering the comrades in Don Ramon's basement, and holding others, and yourself, Don Felix, for death. If there were light I could point out to you the punctuation-marks, the bloody exclamation-points, in her reply. On flagstaves we are now passing I could show you the blackened heads of those butchered comrades, and highest of all, the head of——"

"Hush!" Felix shuddered. "You mean Victoria's father?"

"Yes. But an oppressed people does not gaze on such trophies without——"

"I know. I know. Tell me, though, of Victoria herself. She escaped?"

"The señorita is among friends." Felix sensed rebuke to himself in the formal "señorita."

"Friends," added the young Mexican, "so numerous and so devoted that none other need disturb himself concerning her safety."

Felix whistled softly.

"But thank heaven for that!" he cried heartily. "And as it's all I wish to know, stop this tempest-ridden coach and let

me out. My father is waiting for me."

But the other forcibly restrained him when again he jumped up to fling open the door. The Mexican was strong, and Felix was weak from his wound and dungeon fever.

"Spare another ten minutes with me," said José, "and you will choose to stay."

"You have the advantage," retorted Felix, "and when I think there will be ten minutes more of torture to my poor father——"

"It is for your father's sake that you will come with us."

"I tell you that he is waiting for me."

"Better that, and have your message that you are safe, than that he should part with you to-morrow forever."

"He sent for me," protested Felix, "he should know——"

"That you killed two gendarmes? That you all but killed Trujillo, second only to himself in the government of the province? That you proved yourself the worst traitor of all those found at Don Ramon's that night? No, it would seem that he does not know."

"I was no traitor. I was protecting a woman. My father is the Governor. He hands down simple justice."

"The Governor himself," announced the obstinate Mexican, "could not now save his own son. Trujillo has asked for an *oidor* of the Viceroy. *Ai*, now you understand. A spasm went through you as I said it. The *oidor* is the high priest in justice. He is as the King in person. He is Life. He is Death. For traitors he is always Death. Know then, though as yet the sick Governor himself does not, that it will be the *oidor* whom the imprisoned comrades—and yourself, if you return—will face at their trial to-morrow."

Felix sank back against the seat of the jolting carriage.

"My poor father," he murmured. "If he takes his bed for worry over my disappearance, then for my execution he would take to——"

"Exactly," said José; "to his grave. I see, as I thought you would, that you have turned fugitive in good earnest."

"Not fugitive," cried Felix, his two fists trembling before him in the dark. "No, my friend, but rebel, revolutionist, until there are a few more million free men on God's polluted footstool, and I am one of them."

"I thought, since that night of the pasquinade at the church door, when you laughed in the officer's face, that we should win you."

"Win me?" echoed Felix in angry impatience. "*You?* Whom could *you* win? Who won you? Bless us, good Don José, there are twisted rafters in your garret. It was Trujillo that did it. Spain that did it. Thank them for your recruits! Ah, ah," he moaned in a revulsion to deep sorrow, "if the personification of Spain were but my father, and not the Trujillos. If——"

He paused, caught by a new fear at the thought of his father. If the Governor's son became an avowed revolutionist, then what of that son's father? Suspicion. And, Trujillo aiding, disgrace.

"After all," Felix announced, glumly pouring a libation of the O'Donoju fighting blood on the altar of filial sacrifice, "after all," he repeated, "I believe I shall content myself with being a fugitive. Merely a little skulking fugitive. So tell me, pray, where I am skulking to at present?"

"That you shall learn for yourself," José replied.



OUTSIDE, the balconied, two-storied houses of stone had given way to low wooden dwellings, then to an Indian village-like scattering of shacks, where the night air was rank with the odor of drying cowhides. A long, squat, domino-shaped building Felix recognized as the roadside *aduana*, where municipal customs were collected. It marked the limits of the city and a moment later they passed beyond.

"Ho!" exclaimed Felix, "we have not been challenged. Never a policeman shows his lantern. Never a *ronda* cries 'Halt!'"

"And if they had, we should have garroted them one by one. But some one has smoothed the way for us. Some one has called in the gendarmes, so that one horseman and one carriage may dash unchallenged through the city's streets."

"Some one?" repeated Felix. "My father being sick, Trujillo takes his place. You mean Trujillo?"

"Not a difficult guess, was it?"

"But here's one more difficult," said Felix, frowning into the darkness of the carriage. "Why does Trujillo, after I am released by my father's order—and, of course my father would produce me at the

trial to-morrow—why then does Trujillo interfere? When you and your braves attacked us he was turning the carriage away from the palace. But where would he have taken me? I can swear that it was not to save my life from the *Oidor* to-morrow. Why, then, why? Follow the crooked twists in the villain's mind if you can."

"Not I," declared José, yet from his dry, nervous tone Felix suspected that he could have made a guess and was hiding it.

"Oh, well," said Felix, "it's enough for to-night that the viper was scotched, thanks to you and yours, my merry Jump-up-by-night. Now how was it that you happened to be there, as sweetly apropos as a steel trap?"

"If all the revolution before us were as simple!" sighed José. "Recall, then, that we had and still have comrades in San Lazaro who were the survivors of Trujillo's bloody raid on Don Ramon's. Like you they were awaiting death. Is it hard then to explain that we, their friends, should infest the cafés and *pulque* shops around San Lazaro? Possibly the prisoners might be transferred to another prison, and a little bloodshed would rescue them. Yes, yes, the chance was small, but we were ready for it."

"Still," said Felix, "concerning myself?"

"Oh you!" interrupted the other. "Of you we had more hope. You were the Governor's son. The Governor, once he learned that you were there, would send for you. Guileless gentleman, he would send a carriage only. To rescue you could not be difficult. Besides, we wanted you for the Cause. You, a Governor's son! You were worth that little trouble. And," he added quietly, "you will join us yet."

"Think so, if it cheers you any," said Felix. "Wait though; another question. As my father did not know I was in San Lazaro, if none knew it except Trujillo and Trujillo's jackals, then how did you——"

"Our sources of information are many," José cut in bluntly.

"No, no," protested Felix, "there's no such mystery as all that, for there could be but one source, one person who——"

Suddenly his voice sang with gladness. "I know, I know!" he cried. "It was Victoria!"

"Well, what then?" demanded José sourly. "Would she not relate to us all that happened that night, and, incidentally, say

that she left you there? And, as you were not heard of afterward, neither as wounded or killed, we knew—what simpleton would not?—that Trujillo had smuggled you secretly into San Lazaro."

"Of course, of course," Felix agreed. "And let us hurry, faster, faster. Only bring me to her, that I may thank her."

"Thank her?" echoed the young Mexican. "I see no reason——"

"Mine own eyes for me, then!" Felix laughed.

It was she who had saved him. Victoria! He saw this much with his own mind's eye. He saw her fleeing from the city to some cave or hiding-place of the "comrades." He saw her telling them of the two she had left behind her, her father and himself. He saw her when she had learned that her father was dead. But, though crushed with grief, she did not forget the other one, himself. He knew, *knew*, that it was her pleading which had sent the "comrades" to bring him to safety, to herself.

"Yet what," Felix was so generous as to wonder, "what a task that must have been for this poor José here!"

Wherewith he clapped poor José on the back. "Now, by Santiago," he announced, "I doubt if I could have done it."

The young Mexican stirred in the gloom. "Done what?"

"Oh, nothing. Only," said Felix, "I'm not forgetting it."

CHAPTER XI

THE LITTLE LADY IN SACKCLOTH

BY NOW they were in the open, on the royal highway built by the viceroys to the City of Mexico. The last of the huts fringing the city had been left behind. The air was heavy with the sensuous fragrance of the tropics, and the dense luxuriance of vegetation on either hand made the starlit road a gray ribbon laid through the blue-black jungle.

The carriage and the horseman ahead on Trujillo's horse slowed down, so that the brother revolutionists on foot overtook them and plodded along behind. These were more than fifty, massed darkly and compactly in a sluggish haze of dust that rose under their tread. The road dipped into a deeper shade, and the cool note of running water greeted their ears.

"Stop," cried Felix, "I can not pass that."

"It's where we mean to stop. At least for a while," replied José.

"Then——" said Felix. He got eagerly to the ground, reached the gravel edge of the little stream and threw off his clothes. "At last," he sighed, sinking deliciously into the water.

After a time José came to him. "You will want clean clothes," he said from the bank.

"Will I?" cried Felix. "Oh, angel of sweet charity, hadst thou but an extra shirt!"

"I will lay them here," said the other briefly, putting down a white bundle.

"And I'll into them straight," laughed Felix, as he splashed under for a last time. "Oh, but my blood is awake again," he cooed to himself a moment later on the bank. "It's a mill-race churning through my veins. Eh, eh! Why, I believe I'm a man again. How good it is to feel yourself a man! The world's a medicine-ball. Let's kick it!"

He brought his skin to a glow from the rubbing he gave it with a bit of toweling, and in the darkness picked up one of the garments left for him by José. It was a blouse of coarse native cotton stuff, or *manta*, such as peons wear, and with it the loose flapping *manta* trousers. He found no hosiery. By now he expected none. But, as he expected, he found a pair of *guarachas*, or Mexican sandals.

"And welcome are ye all," he addressed his wardrobe courteously, "for ye are clean." Moreover he donned them.

"A lowly peon's garb," observed José's voice near him in the darkness. "His Excellency's son is not too proud?"

"His Excellency's son," Felix, returned gaily, "is not."

"Then we shall finish with a nut-brown stain on him in the morning."

"But," Felix mentioned, "His Excellency's son has blue eyes."

"Of course," said the other, "His Excellency's son would be a rarity among peons."

"Too much wit, Don José; too much wit." Felix's tone had changed. At the very least it was ominous. "Let's be friends."

For answer, or for lack of one, the young Mexican turned on his heel.



AT THE moment a small troop of galloping horsemen were heard in the direction of Vera Cruz. The sound had all the portent of pursuit. The low murmur of the revolutionist comrades

chatting among the trees ceased. The woods became silent as dark. The soft padding of hoof-beats in the dust drew nearer and, abruptly, very near. The horsemen had entered the wood. They were dipping down to the stream, as the road dipped, when fifty muskets blazed into them.

By the flash Felix saw them, gallant in their uniforms of the lancers, plunge from their saddles, or reel, blindly throwing up their arms. One of them, either not hit or not badly wounded, freed himself from his stirrups, and came plunging, seeking escape through the wood. He encountered José, and they grappled. Felix heard the smashing of twigs as they fell. He hastened toward them. One was astride the other, with his pistol raised as a club in his hand.

"Help!"

That was José's voice. Felix snatched away the pistol, righted it in his hand, pointed and fired. The trooper collapsed like sand ebbing from a bag. Felix pulled out José from under him.

"As I was saying," his voice went on calmly, "let's be friends."

"You have me at a disadvantage, señor."

"No, more on equal terms, that's all," returned Felix, content to let two rescues of José count for one rescue of himself.

The other's hands, at his side, opened and closed and opened, the fingers curving rigidly.

"Why friends?" he asked slowly.

This time it was Felix who turned on his heel.

He found the revolutionists emerging from their ambushade. They set to work capturing the frightened horses, and dragging their dead riders into the brush. Not a lancer had been left alive.

"No fear of more pursuit to-night," said one of the revolutionists, "so we'll have a fire. I'm hungry."

They kindled the fire on the edge of the stream where the banks were steepest and the trees thickest. From a cache near by they brought *frijoles*, *tortillas* and freshly corned beef. They made Felix very welcome. In the anxious concern of Mexicans that a guest be thoroughly gorged, they plied him vigorously with their rough fare.

Seeing them by the light of the fire, Felix was surprised that they were nearly all peons, and that the others at best were seedy *rancheros*, with *charro* jackets and tight breeches of worn yellow leather, their

silver spangles down the leg either lost or tarnished. But he felt an unaccustomed weight on his own head. He took the thing off. It was a high peaked sombrero of straw. He looked down at himself. He was in white—loose, flapping white. He remembered. He was a peon too. He listened to their talk. No, they were no more peons than he. They were young Creoles all, of Mexico's small middle class, shopkeepers, lawyers' clerks, doctors' students.

"*Gracias, señor*," said Felix, declining a crisp *tortilla* while yet one hand was full. "*Gracias*." He pronounced it "*Grathias*."

"*Ola, caballero*," laughed the other warningly, "but you will have to slough off that Gachupin lisp. Practise with us the plaintive nasal holding of an emphasized syllable, and you'll become the lowly *Indio* complete. For example: *Qué estás haciendo—do?*"

Felix nodded, smiling. "*Estoy trabajando—do.*"

"*Bravo, bravo!*" cried his tutor. "You'll do. Aye, aye, you'll do, and when we have russeted over those faded cheeks for you and —The saints! Listen!"

All fell silent, some cupping an ear with a hand. Far down the creek they heard, faintly and cautiously sounded, a hallooing.

"Good," said José. "They're on time, and soon we'll be on our way. On our way, señores, to join the revolution!"

He caught the largest brand from the fire, climbed up the bank and waved it slowly over his head.

The hallooing ceased, to be followed soon after by a crunching of twigs and snapping of branches. At last the firelight revealed white figures of twenty or thirty more peons, if peons they were, each bearing several muskets and powder-horns.



FELIX watched them eagerly, his heart now pounding, now standing still. Yes, there was a woman among them—no, two women. One was old, or beginning to be shrunken by age, with a rosary of black wooden beads about her leathery neck, and also an amulet, as well as relics braceleted on her arms. The other was young, or at least her figure was, of lines of girlish grace, and even subtly piquant in the collarless white blouse and flannel skirt, red across the hips, and yellow to the bare, slender ankles.

Felix sat back, heaving a wrathful sigh. Her cheeks, her arms, her sandaled feet,

were brown. A very comely peon girl, he thought, or perhaps did not think at all, as he turned to José with a question searing his lips.

"You said that she — that Victoria——" he began.

But José was going to the girl, and Felix heard him say:

"We have brought him safe, señorita, and your debt to him is paid, as I myself wished it paid."

Felix saw her raise her eyes, large and sad and full of expression, and he saw a light of sudden joy in them, saw them turn to the group at the fire, until they met his own.

"You are mistaken, José," she said hastily, but looking always at Felix coming towards her, "you were wrong to speak of debts. It could never be paid. Though his life is saved, to save mine he gave more that is dear to him, his father, his—— Felix!" she cried, putting forth both her hands.

"A little lady in sackcloth," he laughed, his tongue ready with any foolishness that might hide the singing of his heart. "Such a little *Indita*," he assured himself, as he looked down at her appraisingly, and swung the two small brown hands he held in his.

"While you," she said, "you do not look like one who dwells in palaces yourself!" She, too, had need of a litting phrase.

José had vanished, biting his lip. But now he sent a comrade to them.

"We have a carriage for you, señorita," said the revolutionist, "and if you and your servant——"

Felix remembered the old woman. "How, Ursula," he exclaimed, shaking her hand.

"She found her way to me," Victoria explained. "José brought her the next day."

"If you two," the "comrade" interposed, "will come with me, we can start at once. And you also, Don Felix," he said, "though you have not joined us, yet you are a fugitive, and to go with us may be your only safety from capture. As you must be yet weak, Don José wishes you to occupy the carriage also, at least until you can mount a horse."

Felix flushed. Such generosity from so sullen a rival, putting him in the one carriage with the adored object of both their loves, was too superb a thing for acceptance.

"I'll march with those of you who go on foot," he said, "and thank Don José just the same."

"But," protested the man, "you are wounded, and——"

"Wounded?" exclaimed Victoria. "Oh, I did not know——"

"A little rap on the head," said Felix, "or I should have brought you here to your friends that terrible night myself. But there, a little rap is over quickly, if one gets over it at all, and I'm ready to march. Where, I don't even ask. Nor does it matter. So only I am one of your many protectors is enough for me."

"But Don Felix," she interrupted, "don't you know——"

"It was plain Felix just now."

She blushed. "Don't you know that we are going to join the Revolution?" she hastened on. "Not only was our Vera Cruz plot discovered, but the central one too, and before the leaders could be captured they have taken the field. Our Captain General is a village priest, far in the interior, who grieves for the poor Indians. And his first General is José's father, who was a Captain in the Queen's Regiment in the Spanish service. They sent José to us to recruit the patriots who used to meet in that basement with my—my father. They had, with father's help, smuggled muskets from New Orleans to a cave. It was the cave I came to after—after—— But," she demanded, "surely you will join us too?"

Felix shook his head.

"I'm only going with you," he said, "and you, you are not going to fight, I imagine?"

"I think," she said quietly, "I may be able to do some good. The peons are flocking to their priest, this village priest who is our Captain General, and many of them will be killed, will be wounded, and I——"

"The Virgin of Guadalupe has stepped from her frame," Felix declared. "When the poor wounded Indian finds you bending over him, and beholds the pity in your sweet eyes, he——"

"Don't!" she begged. "That is sacrilegious! Here we are on the road, and here is the carriage."

He gave her his hand to help her in.

"No, no," she said, "you first."

"I will march near you. Here, at your door."

"No, you are to ride with me. It is Captain Allende's order."

"Captain Allende?"

"José. His commission from his father

reached him yesterday. Don't you know that you are with a company—one full company—of the Revolutionary Army of the Republic of Mexico?"

"Faith, then it is an army to march with." Very firmly he helped her in. She knew that she would be lifted in if she did not give way. And after he had put Ursula, the serving-woman, in after her, he bade her good night and pleasant dreams, and closed the door.

The seeming peons, armed with muskets, had formed in marching order, those mounted on the dead lancers' horses in the lead. Felix heard José's voice:

"Señores, to the city of Mexico, march!"

CHAPTER XII

THE CALL

THE stars shone on Orizaba's snowy crest, glistening in the light like a mantle of whitest lawn, and the little band of insurgents trudged on far below. If they looked behind, they could yet see, past the dark city of Vera Cruz, the revolving light on the prison-fortress of San Juan de Ulua in the Gulf, reminding them of the vengeful, industrious Trujillo there.

Two hours yet remained till dawn when the horsemen in front drew rein, causing the entire column to halt. The horsemen dismounted, and José came back to Felix. He made no comment on discovering Felix on foot. He seemed to take it for granted, from his knowledge of the young O'Donoju, that he would not obey that order, or bow to that generosity, with reference to his riding in the carriage. Nor did he take note of the late prisoner's short breathing and evident fatigue.

"We have nineteen horses, señor," he stated briefly, "and their riders will now walk to let nineteen other comrades ride. I count you among the second nineteen, sir."

"And a fair count, too, I can tell you," said Felix cheerily. "You resume the advantage, Señor Capitán Don José de Alende."

That title, with flourishes, Jose recognized as ripost for "His Excellency's son."

But farther than that his lips parted, he attempted no counter.

"Have the goodness," he said shortly. "I will show you which horse."

"And you?" Felix inquired, when he had mounted, not without help.

"I?" repeated José. "It is my turn to walk."

"Magnificent!" exclaimed Felix. "I see the rights of man means the rights of other men. 'Tis a millennium republic that lies before you for the winning, Señor Captain."

"Forward!" shouted José, falling behind with those on foot.

Felix laughed cozily to himself. "If we're not to be friends, a fretting 'll be for him," he mused. "Yet I'll save his life a few more times, too, and maybe that'll drive him out of the sulks. He ought to know he can't have her. Of course he can't. What would I do? The absurd child doesn't seem to consider that at all. I do, though. Bless me, do I? Oh, my dear, my darling, do I?"

When the next change came, and Felix insisted on giving up his mount with the rest, he found himself tramping beside José. Dawn was breaking far behind them over the grayish-black waters of the Gulf, and it occurred to José that he would rather endure Felix than endure Felix walking beside the carriage where Victoria would be now soon awake. And Felix was duly beholden to this condescension; right cheerfully so.

"Might as well learn what all the stew is about, and who will be pickled," he said to himself.

Aloud he genially began:

"Ah, but I'm a slack one in my history studies," he sighed. "Yet you, my Captain, are a maker of it, and—look here—I'll draft you. Yes, and you will hear me recite. First, a date. In 1810, the present, speeding year of our Lord—good! I know that date—in 1810, then, there began the Mexican Revolution. My, what a fat volume it is which I have learned just tonight! But now my ignorance. I can not tell you who led—or leads—that Revolution. Here, here, José; relax, melt, thaw, unlimber a tongue. Come, my Captain, tell me about this village priest, who overnight bustles forth a Jovian Generalissimo of Freedom."

Despite himself, despite the other's light-some tone, José's eyes glowed, and he could not refrain, even on mocking ears, from pouring out his thoughts, his hopes, his dreams:



"HE HEARD my first confession, that priest. All of us, in our little mountain town of Dolores, we know him for a good father, who sees and pities the suffering of his devoted flock, and sees in us the wrongs and woes of a whole people. Nor does he stop with bidding us seek consolation of God, that we may go on enduring. Oh, no, señor, for this humble curate takes his holy vicarship very practically. He prays, indeed, but rather for guidance as to what to do next. He is ever doing."

José closed his eyes for a moment. "I can see him now," he said, "the robust, chubby — benevolently chubby — ruddy-brown good man, in his long black gown, his knee-breeches, his stockings—of silk, but silk of his own raising, señor, mark that!—his stout buckled shoes——"

"What is he doing?"

"He is out-of-doors, stooped—as scholar and laborer both—head bald at the crown, his hair long and almost white. He has a hoe in his hand. He is in his garden."

"Ho!" observed Felix. "A very busy priest!"

"Do not smile," said Jose. "It is a garden of mulberry-trees. He set them out himself. He is learning the cultivation of the silkworm. He would give his flock God's real consolation: an industry to feed them, clothe them, school them. He has a vineyard, too; and, inspired by him, his parishioners grow grapes, and would make wine."

"But," objected Felix, "do not the laws forbid grape-growing in the colonies? Your priest," he added cynically, "would undermine the Spanish growers."

"And the soil heaven gave us we can not use!" retorted José. "Do you wonder that something of rebellion began to grow instead?"

"I'd wonder if it did not. Then what?"

"Being practical, he learned other things; the making of pottery, of brick, tanning leather, so that we have crockery-factories, brick-yards, tanneries. In a word, we try to live, while he—the last *cuartilla* in his pocket is yours for the asking, and if you are an Indian out of the sierra, knowing no Spanish, he'll give it to you with a blessing in your own idiom, and feed you on honey from his own bees and, if you can learn music, he'll have you in his Indian orchestra."

"A blessed, happy village, Dolores!"

13

"Not so, for there comes the tax-collector, who has bought the privilege of the Viceroy."

"And your practical vicar of heaven then?"

"Seeing him as I do, among his books, you would not ask."

"Among his books?" repeated Felix, at last interested. "Oh, I see, the tomes of the scholastics, of the Reverend Fathers."

"No, no, these are modern books. They are French. The arts. The sciences. Military science, among others. Strategy. Artillery. Fortification. And philosophy. The last word of philosophy. Yes, señor, the definition of a man, that is what I mean. You should hear this village priest of Dolores, whom we all call our Padre Hidalgo, you should hear him define a man for you. But you are a nobleman. Yet he, he would define it to the lowest Indian in exactly the same way."

"Man' is a word. A definition is more words. Words, words."

Jose wheeled on him in a burst of impatience. "You are stubborn. You still do not understand. But if you could see him, this vigorous priest, this Hidalgo, that yet looks seventy! If you could see the head, though it is bowed like a meditative dreamer on his chest! If you could see its splendid modeling, the high forehead, the conqueror jaw, the straight nose that smells out corruption, the thin lips revealing the mastery of self, the heavy brows, and the eyes—aye, his eyes, señor, keen and quick—some will have it that they are green. Oh, but see him, and you'd know why his fellow students, when he was young, called him 'The Fox! Words, words? This priest now leads an army, señor."

"Oh-ho, history begins. Let me learn it all, dear *maestro*."

"As the Viceroy, the King, the sceptered tyrants of the old world, will learn it! Know then that the hour for the uprising was set for weeks yet ahead. Since the first of the year they have been planning it. They? I mean Hidalgo, my father and other officers of the provincial troops stationed at Queretaro, near by. I mean the chief magistrate of Queretaro, the Corregidor Dominguez, his wife and a few others; Creoles all. There were evenings in Queretaro or in Dolores when we played at cards and, as we played, we plotted. We would raise the cry of independence this

next December, when the great fair of San Juan is held. We would seize the nearest barracks and arsenals. The nation would flock to us, and then—but there was a traitor. The brave woman, Dominguez's wife, heard of it, and got word to my father that all were to be arrested. My father rode to Dolores and roused Padre Hidalgo in the night. And did that padre, like a frightened ranter, eat his words? Indeed, you do not know him. He called his little flock to the village church, and they came, the workmen in the pottery-factories, all of them yet a handful, and he raised his voice the louder, this priest—so loud that the world shall hear his words—"The Call"—Mexico's call."

"What was it?" cried Felix.

"What was it?" repeated the young Mexican. Abruptly he flung out his arms, clenching his fists, and his voice rang like a clarion. "*Viva la Independencia!*"



"ONLY three words," murmured Felix, "but more than millions—"

Oh, my dear father, you are keeping me from a fight that draws my soul. Indeed, 'tis a right dutiful son you have, poor dear father!"

After a time he asked, as if to weigh what he had missed: "Has your priest Hidalgo fought any battles yet?"

"It's likely," replied José, "but so far we have only the news that he has unfurled the standard of revolt."

"Then you are not even certain that he leads that army you mentioned?"

"I am certain of it, without needing to know it," said José calmly. "The country is surely flocking to him as we ourselves."

"We? I thought we were marching on the city of Mexico."

"Perhaps Hidalgo has taken the city already. If not, why, we'll help him do it."

"But the reason for all this peon disguise?" questioned Felix. "Those lancers' saddles and this carriage would betray us. And besides, we are a force strong enough—"

"No," said José, "we'll see stronger forces hurrying to defend the city, and we may find it best to separate, and then any one or any few of us who are seen will be passed by as peons belonging to some near-by *hacienda*."

"Just the same," said Felix, with a grim-

ace down at his sandals, "boots and spurs would be more to my notion."

"Because you've inherited them before you have won them?"

"No," said Felix gently; "because my feet hurt!"

CHAPTER XIII

THE TALE OF THE CLOAKED STRANGER

FROM the low cattle-ranges of the coast country and leagues on leagues of sugar-cane and tobacco, José's devoted group wound up the King's highway, among the coffee-covered hills. After a day or so they climbed higher yet, until the hills were mountains and the coffee-belt lay below. Before them, when they bent their chins and gazed, the mighty sierra seemed to sway dizzily at its jagged top, as if momentarily about to crash downward in a terrific avalanche.

By now Captain José's following was more a regiment, or a rabble, than a company, so far as numbers went. The word was spreading like a stream of lava; the word of freedom, of vengeance, of loot. The peons were to be free, the Gachupins scoured out, amassed treasure divided. Down gorge and valley, from *hacienda* to *hacienda*, the lengthening dragon of the word breathed its hot promise.

The peons took the highway, each with his *machete* and a handful of beans in the corner of his blanket, while his woman trudged alongside. Wherever any of these fell in with the Vera Cruz Creoles, they joined the larger band, and José gave them the extra muskets so long as these lasted, and made them drill as they marched. Some of his recruits, he suspected from a sullen independence in their bearing, were only brigands out of the mountains, who were eager for brigandage on the wholesale scale of civil war. But the young Captain could not weigh small scruples. The Gachupins had not.

The large Royalist forces José expected to pass him must have gone before, such forces as the provincial garrisons in Puebla, Orizaba or Cordoba, but he continued the precaution of scouts ahead and others following half a league behind. Moreover it happened one afternoon, where the road was but a shelf in the shoulder of the mountain, that they looked down on the same

road, a half mile's drop beneath them, and saw a short black line, an inch of thread, sliding along through the dust. Not long afterward the scouts in the rear hurried up and announced that this thin traveling bit of string was a considerable body of cavalry. They surely numbered a thousand, at least.

Felix watched José, expectantly.

At first the young Mexican's eyes had taken fire. But slowly he paled. Lives; human lives! That was it; the responsibility.

"From those rocks up there," Felix suggested, "you'd—have 'em."

The embryo Captain, who had not yet worn a uniform, bit his lip. There was something pathetic in his hesitation. "No," he pronounced at last, "they are too many for the risk, and Hidalgo needs us. But the rocks will hide us, horses, carriage and all, until they've gone by. But if a man so much as coughs, let his neighbor knife him that instant."

Fortunately they had ample time before the troops below could mount to this height around the long winding curves of the road.

The rocks that Felix meant were enormous jumbled ledges, rising one behind the other like serried walls. Men could climb among them easily, and be securely hidden from the road below. The horses could be led by a goat path farther up the mountain, and out of hearing.

The carriage was the only difficulty. Yet there was sheer force in plenty for even this. They unhitched the horses. Victoria and Ursula stood aside, and a hundred hands laid hold, tugging at the spokes, heaving beneath, lifting the carriage bodily, while others above drew it up with lariats. Like a huge dead beetle it settled at last behind a ten-foot ledge. Then the women were helped among the crags, after which it was for each man to hide himself.

The road had been hewn out of the solid rock, and rains had washed it clean of dust, so that not a wheel-track or footprint was left to betray them. The sun was shining behind the divide, which cast an ever-deepening shadow down the mountainside. Accordingly the ascending troops beheld only a continuation of the vast, silent, wildly magnificent wilderness out of which they had come.

Felix, lying flat behind a clump of chaparral that overhung the road, peered down on their brutishly unsuspecting progress.

"Why, they're not troops; they're a mob," he thought at first. "Negroes and mulattos, at that."

But he felt that Victoria, crouching beside him, gave a start.

He put his head near hers, and she whispered, "The coast-guards. Poor father, those two companies were his only command, at the last."

The coast-guards! Then these were come from Vera Cruz! A straggling horde of infantry followed, and after these came as vagabond a handful of cavalry. Felix supposed they were the last, until he heard a more rhythmic fall of hoofs, and, casting his eye in that direction, he recognized the uniforms and pennons of the Vera Cruz Lancers; seven hundred of them, the entire regiment.

But what instantly held his eye was a carriage in front, drawn by four superb coal-black horses. There was a something acutely familiar here. He had the feeling that he knew those horses. There was a day, a day of ceremony, when he had ridden behind them, in the state coach of the Governor of Vera Cruz. But this open carriage, here in the mountains, was not a state coach. Yet it might be of His Excellency's stables. Yes, there—on its low paneled door—yes, he could not mistake the arms of the O'Donoj! He drew his breath, and held it. Was he now to see his father? And his father not know!



THERE were two men in the carriage. One was in uniform, in scarlet and blue and plumed cocked hat, with his sword and scabbard lying across his lap. He held his head erect. Something grim and cruel and exultant was in the stiff-necked poise. It was Trujillo. Felix put a hand over Victoria's. She was trembling.

The carriage bent to the turn of the road, and was passing under them. Felix gazed fixedly down on the other man. He was in black, and his head was bowed on his chest. His hair was as white as snow. Felix vaguely knew that the hand under his slipped free, then came again, over his own, and rested there, with a dear and reassuring pressure. For the other man was his father!

A something jangled in the slow-moving carriage. Felix knew that sound. His ears some day hence might have forgotten it;

but never, after hearing it now. His father had raised his hands—both hands—to touch the back of one of them to his eyes. Then the boy saw. There were manacles on the wrists and a chain dangled between.

"No, no, no!" Victoria gasped.

Felix had started up, but had not cried out. Her arm was about his neck.

"No, no, no!" she panted.

"Don't! I must! You saw——"

"Too well, too well," she breathed. "But save him later, when you can. You'll only lose your own life now."

The dull clatter of shod hoofs and scabbards, as the lancers followed, kept them from being overheard. By now the carriage had passed on.



FELIX lay prone again, but with his head down, his face in his hands.

The hubbub of the passing cavalry was a blur in his brain, and one with the clangor of his thoughts. The girl, half sitting beside him, watched him with eyes of tender anxious pity.

The troop went by. The metallic din grew fainter, had almost died away, when down the road they heard a galloping horse. Evidently the lone rider had fallen behind, and was hurrying to overtake his regiment. And so he proved to be when he came into view. It was a lancer.

Felix looked up when the galloping struck his ear. And when he saw the man, saw his face, he uttered a low cry that was hideously akin to joy. The lancer was that lieutenant first met at the church door the night of the pasquinade, next met that more dreadful night at Don Ramon's, and last met—a trick of intuition made Felix instantly certain of it now—last met the night of his release from San Lazaro. None other! He knew the man for the cloaked stranger.

He leaped to his feet and vaulted over into the road almost as the horse would have run him down. But the horse, startled by so abrupt an apparition, swerved roundly out, saw the void there, tried to turn in, lost his footing and went over. During the instant of vain struggle Felix seized his rider, and dragged him safely from his saddle.

"My life, I thank you!" gasped the man, his mind on his escape only. "But that was no way, frightening a——"

Felix pulled him to his feet. "Why is my father in chains?"

"Your father, man? What——"

"My father. Answer."

The dazed officer looked Felix up and down. He saw only a peon. He was the more astounded to behold several hundred such peons appearing from behind crags and hurrying down to the road. His gaze returned to Felix.

"You're crazy, fellow; else cursed impudent. I do not know."

"Laugh!" Felix struck him across the cheek. "Now—— No, do not hold him José—now, why is my father in chains?"

"Don Felix!" exclaimed the man, struggling to draw his sword, while a half dozen hands tore it from him.

"Will you answer now?"

The lancer stood disarmed. These peons all bore muskets or *machetes*. Yet he could not keep an inflection of gloating from his voice as he said,

"Right gladly, Don Felix. Your father is being taken to Mexico City under a charge of treason."

"Treason? Nonsense, you——"

"No, 'tis true; for aiding a traitor to escape."

"What traitor?"

"Why, who but his own son, Don Felix?"

"Now you do lie!" cried Felix. "My father sent to bring me to his own roof to await my trial."

"Nevertheless," retorted the lieutenant, "instead of you, the *oidor* had only the order for your release to pass judgment on. Which explains your father's chains, Don Felix."

"But you," said Felix bitterly, "you could have explained that my father ordered his aide, in your presence, to bring me to the palace."

"Indeed, and on that strain the aide did explain. But naturally the aide could not know—though your father could—that these friends were in wait to rescue you by force."

"And if they had not rescued me, what then? Ah, I see the plot now. I should have disappeared just the same, for you and Trujillo had already turned the carriage from the palace. Trujillo would have kept me in some other hole, and pretended to have captured me afterward, and so had me executed. But not until he should have had my father disgraced, and been raised into his place. It is plain enough. I suppose Trujillo is now Governor?"

"*Pro tem.*, and will be after he helps put down these rebels in the interior."

"God forgive me," moaned Felix, "why did I not go back to my father? It was your treacherous persuasion, José. I might have saved him."

The lancer coolly twisted his mustache. "You might try it yet," he suggested. "Go with me to the Viceroy. You will be thoroughly fusilladed, true; but——"

"But they would not believe you," interposed José.

"José is right," murmured a score of the comrades.

"And this jackal here," José went on, "even if he gave his word to tell the truth, and kept his word—which he would not do—they would not believe him either. In this, only one would be believed by such as the Viceroy and the *oidor*, and that one is——"

"Yes, yes," said Felix hopelessly; "you mean Trujillo?"

"Accordingly," said José, "there remains——"

"What?"

"The Revolution! I knew you would not stay merely a fugitive."

"A fugitive? When I have seen my father in chains!" Scorn gleamed through sorrow in the O'Donoju eyes. "Why, you dunce-heads, for him I'd be Revolution." He stopped. "Oh, his hair looked so white!" he murmured to himself. "And he was putting his hand, the back of his hand, to his eyes! How one's heart can bleed!"

CHAPTER XIV

FELIX O'DONOJU, RECRUIT

THEY tried the lancer prisoner by court martial—like boys playing at court martial, so unfamiliar was it to them—shot him in the back and went on.

Victoria and Ursula, the peon woman, had been sent on already, unsuspecting. Felix rode beside the carriage, it being his turn on horseback. He supposed that those to foot it were still forming behind. He did not even hear the volley of musketry. But later, when he missed the prisoner, he said nothing.

He said nothing, that is, till that night, when they were preparing to camp off the road. José came to him, rather ashen of feature, and said:

"But they showed us how upon our comrades in Vera Cruz."

"Indeed?" murmured Felix.

"He told us. It was his last taunt. They shot our comrades in the back, like traitors, and set their heads——"

"Yet he, your prisoner, was no traitor."

The young Captain of the revolution flushed angrily.

"He was a Gachupin and armed foe to liberty. Isn't that enough?"

"I see," returned Felix absently. "Thus the lofty academic notion of liberty is galvanized under sombreros and blankets. Naturally, it's a bit weird."

"Exalted seigneur," scoffed José, "what would you have done?"

"Oh, I don't know," said Felix wearily. "When I think of his vile abuse of my father's grief, of how he came to the poor sick old man as a friend in the night, I—— It's hard enough, trying not to be glad that you murdered him."

"Murdered?"

"Aye, a word in our dictionary, José."

"You are too nice, señor, with your delicate white hands, to——"

"No," Felix cut him short, "I am not. And there's the horror of it. When I find Trujillo—— Saints in heaven, pray for me when I do!"

The other looked him through, searchingly, scornfully. "Good; I'm glad we have you," he said. "You'll be a general."

"I understand," said Felix, "so's to have a sword to gouge with. And after using I can point it down, and the filthy stream crimsoning the blade will not soil my hands.—— your generals, José! Ten honest fingers are enough. How long yet before we join Hidalgo, do you think?"

José did not answer the question, but something in it, its rabid eagerness, satisfied him.

"You'll do," he said in slow decision, and turned to despatch that night's foray on the nearest *hacienda*.

But Victoria, passing by, had overheard. She was become a person of industrious little hands and housewifely calculation in certain new-found duties. There were no wounded for her as yet, only now and then an ailing one, impoverished by daily starvation, or a maimed one, struck by some unthinking overseer. These she appropriated to herself as a matter of course, and gave them orders in diet, or bandages or

bathing, which with dog-like fidelity they never thought of disobeying.

Then there were the rations brought in, corn to be parceled out and ground to *tortilla* paste by the native women, and the paste to be cooked into *tortillas* for sustenance on the next day's march. In a word there was the administration of a family, a family of hundreds marching to war and blood-letting, of *Inditos*, of brigands, her little children, every one.

Patches of glowing coals, each with a tawny group about it, brought out the shadows among the rocks, and she was busily going from one to the other, a precious canister of salt under her arm, when she heard Felix's voice, asking his question. She stopped, and came to him, where he stood alone, gazing over cavernous space to the first glimpse of the winding, starlit road.

"How long before we join Hidalgo?" she repeated.

He turned and saw her.

"Little madonna," he said, "I suppose we are all asking that."

"But not—as you asked it! I—I hardly recognized the voice as yours."

"Now, by my life," Felix exclaimed, "one would say I'd frightened you."

"Nobody knows when we shall meet Hidalgo," she said hastily. "There has been no news of him since we left Vera Cruz. Perhaps even——"

"He has been captured," suggested Felix, "and the Revolution is at an end."

"No, no, that can not be. Or it will start again."

"I am quite sure that it will start again."

"Felix!"

The young man's eyes opened wide in hurt surprise.

"What, can't I say the simplest thing without its frightening you? Come, Victoria, where is the trouble? How you look at me, like some sorrowing little mother on a huge son who's disgraced himself."

She shook her head. She was not to be rallied out of it. Tears blinded her, and her look was suddenly stricken.

"What wo, what wo we have brought on you, Felix!"

"Now if I understand this——" he began, enraged against himself if he had caused her pain, and putting out a hand in clumsy effort at comfort.

"You can not mean that you do not un-

derstand," she said weeping softly. "You can not, when it has ruined your father, and broken your heart this day with seeing him, and—*changed* you so, *you*, who used to be—— Oh, the steel in your voice cuts me—here, and there's cold steel in your eyes, Felix, while your soul——"

"Say it's a bayonet, Victoria," he laughed.

"Don't," she begged, "don't laugh again like that! A bayonet? I fear it is. I know it is."

"Nonsense!" he said.

"No," she said, "and we are the cause!"

"We?"

"I! My father! Had we forbidden you our house, knowing the senseless risk to you——"

"Your father did urge it, Victoria."

"As I urged him. But when you persisted, if I myself had barred the door to you——"

"What, and broken my heart indeed!"

"Had I," she went on, "Trujillo would not have found you there that night, and——"

"And you would have been at the dog's mercy! Now that's enough, Victoria. Try to know us a little better, dearheart—my father and myself. He, this moment, if he knew, would still have me do as I did do, in a woman's cause, and he'd rejoice, too, that I perforated the magnificent rascal! No, no, that part would be done again, exactly as it was done. I curse only my stupidity, coupled with José's persuasion, which kept me from going straight to my father after I was rescued from Trujillo. No matter; even that is spilt milk now. A recreant might froth over it. But I? I am wondering when we'll join Hidalgo. Faith, how that name of an unknown priest suddenly spells Heaven's Justice, or all there is of Hope!"



BREASTING the great divide at last, the band of insurgents began to wind downward toward the high plateau, or so-called Valley of Mexico, which had been the fertile Aztec kingdom of Anahuac. Cortez's indomitable and venomous little band had scaled these mountains for its conquest, and now the descendants of conquerors and conquered both were thronging the same road to win Anahuac back again.

They were too large a force by now to

hide successfully, or to wish to. They could have made head against a regiment, but no regiment was coming against them. Wherever comfort after the pain of marching offered, there they took it, whether in a village, a wayside *mesón*, or in *hacienda* buildings. Young Captain José Allende had much to do with keeping down wanton pillage, and even massacre of shopkeepers or *hacendados*—having the least taint of the hated Gachupin. José and his Vera Cruz Creoles, muskets in hand, herded their *Indito* recruits away from their victims. Of plunder, they let the *Inditos* take only what they needed in food, raiment and ammunition. The meek *Indito*, however, was fast outnumbering the Creole, and with numbers he waxed less meek.

"What else, José?" demanded Felix with a low laugh. "Prepare the soil for a flower and expect the weeds. If for Liberty, watch for the Terror. Oh, be a little less glum, valiant Captain. Or, wait and ask that mild priest of yours, Fra Hidalgo. Either I underrate his calm, hoary wisdom, or he will tell you that both flowers and weeds are needed to choke out the century-old perennial, the deadly nightshade of tyranny."

Of this, as they descended upon the rich table-land, they soon began to have abundant and shocking evidence. They had it in *haciendas* desolated on their way, in ravaged fields, in the stench of butchered cattle, in looted manors, chapels and storehouses, in blackened walls, and now and then in human beings, brained with *macheles* as they fled.

Far ahead, where dust hung over the road in a yellow cloud, they perceived a small scurrying horde, like new Children of Israel bursting out of bondage. And when these had outdistanced their vision, it was not long before they made out another such hurrying, formed like a dense volatile vapor after the first had been wafted on; then another, and another, as night succeeded the morning, or one day followed another.

They were not long in learning the reason for this more violent exodus, and what Moses inspired it. They overtook one of the tribesquatted in the shade of a maguey, mouthing his woe by the roadside. He was old, toothless, a bundle of withered, rotted leather. Bone-leprosy had eaten him to the shins. The lazar cackled one name.

"Hidalgo. *El padre Hidalgo, señores.*

Carry me with you. Carry me to the blessed Father Hidalgo, and I'll pray for you, good señores."

José questioned him and, though he was vague, one rambling phrase was startlingly definite. The Captain-General of the Lord had beaten the Gachupins. Hidalgo had smitten the oppressor. Fields and herds and treasures belonged to the *Indito*, and Hidalgo was giving these things back to the *Indito*. To the padre, then, would come each starving, suffering one. But his own limbs, mumbled the leper, were "a little unsteady, señores," and for the love of the Virgin, would they carry him to good Padre Hidalgo?

So Hidalgo had won a battle! At least one. It was the first news they had had since leaving Vera Cruz. It was wild-fire, this news. It had spread this far, and each lowly peon, stirring to the breath of the flame, bore the torch or brandished the *machele* in his hand.

José and his contingent learned more as they hastened on. They learned how the cossacked priest, Hidalgo, and Allende, the former Captain in Spain's service, with four or five hundred of the village pottery-workers gathering at the cry of independence, had thought first of instruments of death. In their own village they had ransacked the houses of Spaniards for arms and, for what they lacked, made themselves clubs, lances, slings and bows and arrows.

Then they had started forth and, as they went, villages and *haciendas* poured out their numbers, until the army of Freedom was a rabble of several thousand of peons on foot, of *rancheros* on horses stolen from plantations, and women and children flanking the disorderly column. From a church they had taken a picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and raised it as their standard, screeching as they tramped: "Long live our Lady of Guadalupe, and death to the Gachupins!"

A small garrison-town, San Miguel, had been the first point of attack. Here there were muskets and powder and shot. The Spanish Colonel withdrew to the municipal building with his regiment, even as the town itself rose to welcome the incoming insurgents. As for a battle, there had been none. The Spaniards surrendered, and Spaniards were stuffed into jail just emptied of Mexicans. The Queen's regiment, made up of provincial dragoons, mutinied in

barracks, cheering for Allende, their former Captain. Looting began, and only by great labor Hidalgo, supported by Allende with sword in hand, had saved the Spanish prisoners from death.

Next the Revolutionary Army, now ten thousand or more, as easily took the more considerable town of Celaya, with garrison, munition and money in the public treasury. Populace and army both ran amuck, and swarmed through the city like famished wolves. Here the priest Hidalgo was acclaimed Captain-General of America.

This much José and his followers plucked out of the wild fire.

"We are late," murmured the Creoles. "Hurry, let us hurry!"

Felix was thinking rapidly. Here at last was a basis for calculation. "The priest must take Guanajuato yet before he can move on the capital," he mused aloud. "My father is in the capital. Come," he said, "let us then help Hidalgo take Guanajuato!"

CHAPTER XV

A WASTED SHOT

FELIX'S quick flash of insight as to Hidalgo's strategy withstood all the laborious reasoning that José and others brought to bear on it.

First, if Mexico City, but a few miles away, were taken, they would have heard of it by now. Or if Hidalgo were besieging it, or even marching toward it, a rumor of so heavy purport would have freighted the air.

But the news they had heard included none of this.

What, then, would the Captain-General be doing?

After leaving Dolores he had gone south, passing the strong city of Guanajuato on the west, to take the weaker Celaya. There he had made himself strong, but not strong enough to continue on to Mexico and leave a hostile force such as the Guanajuato garrison behind him. Felix was right. The Captain-General would go back and reduce Guanajuato first.

Hidalgo, at the last account, was still at Celaya. There he would necessarily remain for some days, organizing a new municipal government, putting some discipline into his raw army, receiving the hosts of recruits and, in a word, so knitting together his re-

sources as to hazard the greater enterprise. Celaya lay a hundred miles, more or less, northwest of the City of Mexico, and Guanajuato a hundred and fifty miles. José hoped that he might reinforce Hidalgo with his own offering even at Celaya; or if not there, beyond, in time to take part in the storming of Guanajuato. He and his band now concentrated all effort on haste.

To avoid the City of Mexico they turned north. But in this way they missed the road to Celaya. Then they learned from the latest of the recruits flocking by the hundreds to them that Hidalgo was preparing to leave Celaya and march in force on Guanajuato.

"Very well," José quickly calculated, "we'll join him on the road to Guanajuato. We are in time. We can do it."

They had come more than a hundred miles since turning north. They had branched westward, shunning Pachuca and the garrison there. So they had passed Celaya on the south, and were now almost south of Guanajuato, being actually nearer to Guanajuato than was Hidalgo himself.

They had come among the bleak, dreary, bone-dry sierras that were the backbone of the continent. Here and there in the mauve or rusted face of the rock, a gaping black hole, with its ant-like excrescence spilling down the mountainside, let them know that they were entering the fabulous region of a thousand silver mines. The road was but an Indian path, widened for the passage of the Viceroy's troops and oxen treasure-carts. It narrowed perilously in places where it had been hewn out of the virgin rock. At these turns Felix had Victoria and old Ursula dismount from Trujillo's now well-battered carriage, and he himself led the horses until the way became safe again.

He seemed to take no note at such times, when he waited by the carriage door to help Victoria in, that José was with her. He seemed not to see that José had been walking by her side, taking her elbow over the rough stones, when he happened to think of it, and always, though speaking little, paying her earnest suit with all the suggestion of his deep, sullenly repressed emotion.

Once, though, Felix was poignantly disturbed, when he surprised her gaze on himself, anxious, hurt, wondering, inquiring, as José closed the carriage door after her. That gaze brought him out of his dark pre-occupation and he turned hastily away,

touching his peon's sombrero. He did not know that the soft brown eyes, with their pitying, wounded look, were often on him like that; very, very often since the day he had peered down and seen his father in chains.

"She must know that I love her," he muttered. "I do love her—how deeply! I do. I know I do, and yet—I do not feel. My mind, soul or whatever it is, is not always dwelling on her as it used to do. Something drives her from my thoughts. Something? What's that?" His head jerked up in a kind of fear. "The rattling of chains again! My father's chains! But this time I was not even thinking of him. That is, I—I am almost certain that I was not."



LITTLE by little the road dropped down, until it only hemmed the base of the heights. On the right the mountains fell off somewhat, so that here there was a pocket of earth among the rocks, a level clearing planted to corn the year before, and now a lonely stubble-field, fringed by clumps of willows. They were skirting a foot-hill spur on their left, which lay like a sleeping black dog, its nose between its paws.

José, Felix and several Creoles were riding ahead of the column. Thus they came to the point of the spur, where they perceived that the country opened abruptly, and that the road swerved sharply across a rocky cactus-plain. The plain was two or three miles wide, bounded by another range, where the road lost itself in the gloomy mouth of a canyon.

José was in the lead, and this vista had no more than opened before his eyes than he jerked back on the reins and, with startled, uplifted hand, halted the others. They looked, following the road with their gaze and, where it entered the canyon, they saw a column of horsemen just emerging upon the plain, four or five abreast, coming toward them. Polished metal of scabbards and helmets caught the glint of the sun.

"Cavalry! They're cavalry!" cried José in a whisper.

"But coming this way? It can't be Hidalgo already."

"No. Then they are Gachupins. What—"

"We're lucky, that's all," interposed Felix. "They haven't seen us yet. They can't, behind this hill. Keep back, dis-

mount and send the horses to the rear. We will scatter over the nose of our hill, each man flat behind a rock or clump of chaparral, and——"

"Thank you," José checked him with a touch of reproving dignity even in his eagerness. "I see, and our first volley ought to demoralize them. They'll think we are an army, maybe Hidalgo's own army. But—the señorita, the women?"

"I'm going back to them now," said Felix. "There's this old corn-field, and those willows over there on the edge of it. I'll have time to hide them in there, where they'll be out of the line of fire."

He turned his horse, the mounted Creoles with him, while José, dismounted, remained to deploy his force in ambush on the hillside. Felix and the Creoles hastened past the thousand or more peons of their little army. Having rid themselves of their horses far in the rear, the Creoles hurried forward again to help José in the preparations for battle.

Felix pointed out the willows to the driver of Victoria's carriage, and saw him start across the stubble-field to that hiding-place, with the peon women skurrying behind in the wake of the carriage. Urged by an afterthought, he ran to the vehicle, leaped to the step and attempted a word of comfort to the girl within. It was her face at the window, white, wan and pitying, that had inspired the afterthought.

She shook her head impatiently when he told her not to be frightened; that she would be out of danger.

"Oh, do not kill, do not kill! *You*—do not!" she stammered.

He swung from the step, following the carriage with a puzzled look on his face.

"Faith, now, it's much she'd deny me," he muttered. "I wonder why."

He noted the priming of his musket, hefted his powder-horn and leather pouch of bullets at his belt, and turned, running, to join José and the other Creoles.

He found them herding the peons who had firearms. They stationed them behind rocks or in gulleys where their aim would be effective, and feverishly urged them to hold a steady weapon for the *patria* and the Virgin of Guadalupe. The peons who had only *machetes* and knives were massed in the road itself, hidden from the approaching enemy by the spur of the hill, where they awaited a possible order to charge pell-mell.

The leisurely canter of the troops toward

them in the plain below was already swelling on their ears, and even the chaffing clangor of scabbards against leather, before every head was down on the barren, desolate hillside; but then that silent hillside was as if infested by vipers, where pairs of alert eyes by hundreds watched, unblinking and unseen.

"Do not kill! You—do not!"

Methodically as though he were conning a lesson in cloistered Salamanca, young Felix O'Donoju shifted the barrel of his weapon into line with the breast of the leader of those glittering horsemen below. His eyes running down the sights, he kept that line by cool adjustment. The oncoming figure, that filled his eye at the end, grew and grew, until it filled his universe. He sucked in his breath.

"Trujillo!"

 BITTER passion deranged what had been methodical. The poignant thirst to kill—a murderous leap of his nerves—broke by a hair's breadth that delicate and fatal line of his musket's barrel. The ball tore upward, only snatching off an epaulet.

The lone shot in the wilderness made the tense watchers jump as if struck by a lash. José, their Captain, sprang up, waving a *machete*.

"Now! Fire—fire!"

He was absurdly enraged against his own followers because they had not fired already.

The enemy reined in, staring blankly around. Then a spattering of lead swept through them. The hillside spat fire from bush and rock in short flashes. Horses reared and trampled their riders, or fell on them, kicking shod hoofs.

José turned on Felix.

"They're the lancers, the Vera Cruz Lancers!" he cried.

"Better be ordering your men to reload," said Felix. "They're raw. Many of them won't even think of it."

"But the lancers," persisted José. "They're not Gachupins. They're Mexicans. They're trained soldiers. It's waste to kill them. If I could only get them word—I think they'd desert to us. If——"

He tore a strip of white cloth from his blouse, tied it to the blade of his *machete* and, waving it over his head, started down the hill towards the lancers. These were clearing themselves of their fallen comrades

and pawing hoofs, and were being cursed into a semblance of order by Trujillo. But Trujillo himself was uncertain. He hesitated between a flight and a charge. Then he saw a seeming peon coming down the hill towards him bearing a flag of truce on a *machete*. Several others, likewise seeming to be peons, rose from among the rocks and joined the embassy.

"Pest! If they're only peons!" It was a contingency for a little craft, nothing more.

Trujillo put up his hand to his men, and waited. Yet, while he waited, his furtive gray eyes searched out the hillside, and then the stubble-field. The hillside was alive with sinuous forms, the stubble-field was bare. But his twitching gaze rested on a clump of willows, over on the edge of the field, where evidently a little mountain stream bordered it. The eyes steadied, deep in their sockets.

A patch of crimson, a petticoat, could be seen among the willows. The women of these peons were there. Thus he ferreted out the vulnerable spot in the rebel defense. But not for peon women did the Spaniard continue gazing so exultantly. It was a dark outline, conforming to the outline of a carriage, that so interested him. He spoke, and one of his Captains spurred his horse to his side.

Trujillo was yet speaking to this Captain when José, with the flag of truce, followed by the several other Creoles garbed like peons, drew near and stopped. Trujillo had been watching them narrowly while he gave his orders. He frowned, as at some irrelevant phantasy.

"I could swear that certain of their faces are familiar!"

Abruptly he laughed.

"What," he cried, "Don Felix! No, no—but it is—ah, Don Felix O'Donoju!"

CHAPTER XVI

A CLIMAX IN TREACHERY

"AND who is this with you, Don Felix O'Donoju?" asked Trujillo in the same insidious note of his first greeting. José and the flag of truce were forgotten. Or they could wait.

Astride his charger, imposing, martial, menacing, he contemplated the Governor's son standing there in the dust of the road.

His Excellency's son was in tattered yellow-white. A waif, a vagabond of the people, lithe, straight figure of a young *Indio*, so seemed the Governor's son. His sandaled feet cracked from trudging toil. His hair was matted under its sombrero. Yet he was no meek and lowly peon. Something deadly in the blue eyes sought to grapple with the Spaniard's shifting ones.

Trujillo, however, was so possessed of some inner, sinister hope that he took no note of the implacable resolve, of judgment poised for execution, in the lad's whole tense figure. There was his question first, which evil inspiration had whip-lashed across his brain and across his lips, "And who is with you, Don Felix O'Donouju?"



FOR here was one fugitive. What, then, of the other? Like the darting of an adder's fang, Trujillo's thought went to that other fugitive, and struck unerringly at the shadowed shape of a carriage among the willows. Why should these Creoles, marching light form the Gulf into the rugged heart of the continent, burden themselves with a carriage? What so precious did the carriage hold? There rose in his mind's viscid eye the piquantly undulating lines of a girlish form, of lips like a scarlet flower, of hair subtly fragrant, of soft brown eyes that were clear deep pools, which he had longed to transmute into liquid fires of passion, and of cool white flesh, which, if he could touch—the thought of that shot hot flames from his finger-tips into his blood.

But he must not press his question. It were poor wisdom. He chose to let it be understood that he meant only the bearers of the emblem of truce. He took his measures adroitly. With an apologetic wave of his hand to Felix, he brought the same hand to salute at his helmet, addressing José as one general to another. No touch of irony was apparent in it. He was flattering, specious, in his steady courtesy. Had not the ragged chief with a piece of *manta* on the *machete* blade surprised and dumfounded the gallant regiment of lancers? Might he not destroy them if he would?

And Trujillo was trying to provide against being destroyed. He was even then fleeing from Guanajuato, because Guanajuato was daily expecting to be besieged by Hidalgo. To the Governor of Guanajuato he had said that, having delivered his

prisoner, he must return to the City of Mexico. He would not even leave his lancers. He urged the Viceroy's commands, though such were not the Viceroy's commands at all. And so he had left the imperiled city to its fate. He only wished to continue his way.

All deference, then, to the mercy of a parley, and would the magnanimous victor indicate how the outgeneraled lancers might come off with their lives and honor?

As José was about to reply, Felix spoke: "The favor, one moment," he said. Then: "Colonel Trujillo, what have you done with my father?"

"Your father? I?"

"What have you done with my father, Colonel Trujillo?"

Trujillo looked down into the face raised to his. As yet he saw only the torture there; saw only what pleased him.

"You exalt me, truly, Don Felix!" he said. "As though it were for such as I to hold the destiny of his Excellency. Deign rather to take your question to the Viceroy, sir."

"I will have from you," said Felix, "if not what you have done with him, at least what your Viceroy has done with him. Where is my father?"

"Oh, as to that," replied Trujillo affably, playing always on the agony of the other's suspense, "as to that, Don Felix, I had the honor of bidding his Excellency, your father, good-by only yesterday morning."

"Where? Tell me where?"

"In Guanajuato, señor."

"But——"

"I know; Guanajuato is not his Excellency's province. But did you think the Viceroy would send him back to Vera Cruz?"

"You speak, señor," said Felix, "as though the Viceroy had no dungeons in the capital. Why send my father this long dangerous way, in this dangerous time, to Guanajuato?"

"I suppose," Trujillo mused aloud, "it was to give me company on the road. The Viceroy is very good, and as I was to take my lancers straight to Guanajuato, where your rebel friends were expected, and as I was reluctant to part with my honored traveling-companion——"

"You mean," said Felix, very slowly, "that you have imprisoned my father in a jail of Guanajuato?"

"Tut!" said Trujillo, "do you not know

that your friends, the rebels, when they take a town, throw open the jails, as well as murder us poor Gachupins? And yet," he went on, in his maddening way of musing aloud, "it would of all things be regretful to me, to the good Viceroy, to us all, if His Excellency, formerly Governor of Vera Cruz of so long and illustrious service, should perish at the hands of these rebels, these traitors, to whom he has sent his only son. Alas, would it not, Don Felix?"

"José," Felix turned abruptly, "let us finish quickly with this scullion. Then on to Guanajuato. We may have only just time to arrive before Hidalgo."

"Hidalgo must have taken Guanajuato already," said José, "for why should Colonel Trujillo here and his lancers be leaving a city they were sent to aid?"

Felix looked up sharply at Trujillo. "Faugh, José," he said and spat in the road, "the coward is running away! He did not wait for Hidalgo. Now you finish with him. But with despatch. With despatch, José."

Trujillo's malignant scowl passes sluggishly from between his eyes. Before José had reached a conclusion, he was giving to it all the deferential attention that his craft prescribed.

Felix, watching, marveled at the great, glittering brute's mastery of himself, even while an unkempt, ragged fellow—for José would have done for the pose of a roadside beggar—was calling on him and his arrogant host of lancers to lay down their arms and surrender.

Felix took José by the sleeve. "Careful, careful," he whispered.

José shook his head impatiently. The fanatical ardor of the patriot blinded him.

"Señor Trujillo," he raised his earnest, quavering voice, "we are fighting for Mexico, Mexicans. Yet at the first flare of powder, we stop. Why? you ask. Because, with the lifting of the smoke, we see that those under our muzzles are Mexicans. Mexicans, as we are. Mexicans, whom we are fighting for. We can not believe that they would fight against us. Until we know, we can not do the murder of killing them. That, señor, is why we cease firing. Of you, a Spaniard, we demand surrender. Honorable surrender, señor, since you face annihilation otherwise. But for these behind you, for these Mexicans armed by unnatural chance in the service of our foreign oppressor, for them it shall be a welcome, the wel-

come of brothers by their brothers at the heart-breaking call of a common mother. Let them hear that call, señor. In pity for them, and for your own life, let them hear it, and force us not to slay our own kind and kin."

Felix started anxiously. The consummate Mars was seeming to consider. He was allowing that insidious plea to reach the ears of his men. Felix turned with blazing eyes on José.

"Fool, fool!" he moaned, half aloud. But José shook him off.

More of the ambushed Creoles had risen from the rocks. They were stirred hopefully by José's high-pitched eloquence, and when Trujillo slowly, resignedly began to discuss the conditions of surrender, they crowded eagerly nearer. Their anticipation of triumph was infectious. Others followed down the hillside into the road, even peons, forgetting discipline, trusting to the flag of truce. Trujillo saw them out of narrow lids, and continued deliberating on José's proposal in the suavest tones of his rasping voice.

"Send them back, quick, quick!" cried Felix.

 TOO late! Trujillo's low tones whipped abruptly into a command, a snarl; and from their hips a score of lancers fired their carbines into the disordered group of rebels. A hundred other troopers drove home their spears, and charged, with poised lances. The little group vanished like beach-grass under a wave. A few spasmodic shots were forced from the hillside, but that was all. The body of lancers, having swept down the truce party in the road, jerked their horses to their haunches, turned and retraced the charge.

Felix had flung himself face downward, as far to the roadside as time was given him, covering his head with his arms. The thunderous rush passed. He raised his head. Quivering forms, brained comrades, strewed the road. One, alive but maimed past movement, was sobbing between raw lips:

"The monster! The monster!"

It was José. The lancers were coming back. Felix crouched, caught up José, staggered and went down, José under him. The rush of hoofs passed again.

But, intent now on a newer maneuver, the troopers let their horses swerve clear of the bodies in the road. This newer maneuver?

The rebels on the hillside were yelling, and firing their muskets in a dazed sort of rage. Felix raised his head. There were hoof-beats off in another direction; hoof-beats and the sound of wheels.

He looked. A company of lancers from the rear had taken the stubble-field by a sweeping loop to the willows, and now they were racing back, flattened forward on their pommels. In the mass, and moving with it by fearful jolts, was a carriage; Victoria's carriage that had been left among the willows. At the head of either horse a lancer, leaning from his saddle, clutched the bridle, and others lashed and probed the terrified animals with lances.

One trooper, and Felix saw it was Trujillo, raced beside the carriage door, and constantly lay over his horse's shoulder to push the door shut, while some one within frantically tried to push it open and leap forth under the clattering hoofs. Felix had a glimpse only, as momentarily the mass about the carriage parted and blended again, of a face deathly white at the window. Two minutes later the lancers with their prize regained the road, and instantly became one of the whole fleeing regiment, fleeing back towards Guanajuato.

The crazed firing from the hillside was not so much as noticed. Only a rider here and there went down, and was seen again, crumpled and writhing, in the wake of the troop. Then the lancers were out of range, a dust cloud moving across the plain toward the mouth of the canyon.

CHAPTER XVII

FELIX TAKES A CITY

WHEN the main body of the lancers turned and were joined in their flight by the other lancers surrounding the captured carriage, Felix got to his feet.

Pursuit! That was the one thing in his brain; that, and the vision of Victoria's white face at the carriage window. Pursuit! Some way, somehow!

He was rather incoherent about it at first. The hill was alive with the bewildered, agitated peons who had been placed in ambush there. Also was the road behind the spur, where peons with *machetes* had been massed in readiness for action. Felix yelled at them all, waving his arms, gesticulating wildly at the retreating lancers.

"Charge, charge!"

The peons took up the word like a stricken rabble, brandishing weapons and muttering curses as their sandaled feet padded the dust.

Felix's first crazed thought was to lead this vengeful though unmounted horde, and overtake the galloping lancers on foot. But he quickly came to his senses as to that, and he stepped aside and let the peons swarm by without him. The last twenty or thirty of them, however, he stopped.

"No, you," he ordered these, "you stay behind. You must make litters of those willow saplings yonder, and you must bring Don José and these other wounded comrades with you to the first village, and care for them, and get surgeons for them."

There remained the horses of the little army, and the Creoles to mount them. With the horses brought from Vera Cruz, and others ridden by *ranchero* recruits or taken from *haciendas* on the way, there were now more than sixty or seventy. These, it will be remembered, had been taken out of the line of musket-fire and left on the road behind the hill, including Felix's own mount. Felix now called to the Creoles to bring the horses, and he and they mounted.

They drove home their spurs, and the little band was quickly bent in mad haste after the vanishing cloud of dust raised by the regiment of lancers. They soon overtook and passed the peons on foot, a thousand of them, doggedly, tirelessly fox-trotting, but Felix yelled to them from his saddle to follow, to keep following, and not once to stop, for he would need them, need them badly.

Felix did not deceive himself as to his half hundred or so of cavalry being able to cope with a regiment of lancers. He would indeed need those thousand of tawny sandaled infantry. The one thing was to keep the lancers going, ever to keep them going. That would allow Trujillo no pause for insulting Victoria with his attentions. Also it was Felix's sole chance to overtake them and engage them with his full force—the force that had so suddenly but emphatically become his.

He counted on this with grim confidence, even though the great bulk of his force was on foot.

Infantry, he knew, could outdistance cavalry if only the course were long enough.

Well, the lancers, in coming from Guanajuato, had already come a fatiguing distance. Evidently from their haste when first seen by the ambushed insurgents on the hill, they had come at a fatiguing gait.

Now, without rest, they would have to make that distance back again, and at a much more perishing speed.

Felix was soon confirmed in the hope born of this calculation. He guessed that the first retreating spurt of the lancers could be a spurt only, and when, with his own comparatively fresh horsemen, he turned into the steep road of the canyon beyond the plain, he perceived not only that the lancers had slowed down, but that he had gained on them, yes, he was still gaining, and would soon be within striking-distance.

But, with only his horsemen, he could not strike. He could only slow down himself until the peons behind arrived within distance for aiding him. By this time, however, the lancers had increased their lead.

By almost overtaking them and so keeping them going; then by waiting for his peons on foot, and each time decreasing the lead of the lancers; thus Felix hoped to bring up his full might on the very heels of the weary pursued.

With which object he allowed the lancers no opportunity to halt, much less to camp, through all that night that followed, but he kept them going, going, higher and higher into the sierra, and still on, throughout the next morning.



THEY were now among the silver-mines. Everywhere the bleak lean mountains, on bosom, shoulder or flank, seemed taken with virulent eruption. The tortuous road, the adobe villages pocketed here and there where ores were milled, the breech-clouts of men, sack-laden burros, all things were rusted with a powdered sifting that had once been the sierra's heart of solid rock. The ancestors of the breech-clouts had hunted in wide freedom over these mountains within which they themselves had become burrowing rats. Now after centuries the thud of hoofs on the roof of the world was a tocsin calling them up into the day again. They scaled slimy ladders, braining guard or mine-captain, and climbed from the pits, pouring forth like ants on an intent, mysterious migration.

"Was it Padre Hidalgo, at last going to

take Guanajuato?" they asked their excited fellows who labored on the dumps above ground.

"No, it was not Hidalgo, yet," these replied. "But Hidalgo must be close behind, for what you heard were Gachupins in panic fleeing back to Guanajuato."

Then came the ringing of hoofs in pursuit and the miners lined the road. They looked to see the liberator priest and his army. But they saw only sixty or seventy horsemen. Not one seemed like either priest or Captain General or even officer. Yet there was one who rode wildly in the lead, and pointing ahead with his *machete* shouted: "To Guanajuato! To Guanajuato!"

So the horsemen passed, checking nothing of their haste, and behind, not very far behind now, a horde on foot followed, urging in a raucous, dust-choked growl: "To Guanajuato! To Guanajuato!" Whereupon the miners fused into the migrating stream, and so the bowels of the earth gave up recruits to Don Felix O'Donoju.

Toward noon they entered a narrow valley, or gorge, between two steep ranges, and directly they heard a furious clanging of bells among the silent hills.

"At last, Guanajuato!" said Felix to himself.

"It's the general alarm," said the miners to one another. "Governor Riaño is ringing the call to arms."

Felix called on his troopers for a last spurt. Trujillo, the lancers, the carriage and the girl, were just ahead, and would soon reach the protection of the city. Even so, though now less than a thousand yards ahead, the lancers halted. Felix perceived an outpost there of several hundred men, and with them Trujillo was attempting to form a line of battle across the road. But suddenly he abandoned that idea, and with a curse ordered the lancers on again.

Felix understood as he came up to the outpost, for to the last man the soldiers of the outpost were shouting a welcome. Trujillo had seen that they were wavering; and would not trust them. They merged with the host behind Felix's troopers, and swelled the vengeful, growling mutter with their shriller cries.

Felix took the dust of the hindmost lancer, and leaned past his horse's ears, straining to fill the gap.

Lancers and pursuers swerved as one

column and then Guanajuato, the city in a mountain pocket, blazed white on their vision.

It was like a city of great blocks of marble set on the steep slope. The streets were steps. The white plastered adobe houses were on shelves in the rock. Except for rounded domes and towers of churches, where the bells were ringing, the roofs were flat, and the roofs were filled with people, and on some of them cannon were mounted.



A MESSENGER from the direction of Celaya had but just brought word that Hidalgo was coming, and again, as almost daily for a week past, the general alarm was sounding, and the *intendente*, or Governor, was again trusting the populace to help his garrison defend the city. Then, when they in the city heard the galloping of Trujillo's five hundred horses, they were sure that Hidalgo was on them, and the Governor himself hastened to a barricade across the valley road. Already the forces there had recognized the lancers, had opened and let them in, and had closed again against the pursuers. A bayonet impaled itself in the neck of Felix's horse.

Felix slipped to the ground, was surrounded and with his *machete* he struck and struck at a haze of nut-brown faces. His horsemen were striking too, having fired their muskets, while from the roofs and streets they were fired on in turn, and dropping fast. But down the road the low growl of a multitude had at the first note of musketry swelled into a yell, and soon Felix's host on foot, in the narrow gorge seeming tens of thousands, appeared trotting up the road.

From the roofs of the city a cry went up "Hidalgo! Hidalgo!"

And hearing it, as it went from roof to roof and was taken up in the streets, the Governor behind the barricade looked at Trujillo and shook his head.

"I knew it, I knew it," he said. "My own city will turn on me."

"They're doing it already," said Trujillo between white lips. "Where will we—"

"Hide?" queried the Governor, his brave eyes sickening at what they beheld in the other's soul. "No, where will we die, Colonel Trujillo! I've thought of that. Withdraw your lancers and your prisoner to the

castle—I mean the Granary—sir. I'll fall back on you when I must."

"Must," he quickly realized, was instantly.

The firing from the roofs had almost ceased. The peons from the town were flocking down the precipitous streets toward the barricade. His force there, a squadron of the Regiment of the Prince and half a regiment of provincial infantry, were like to be caught between two millstones. The Spaniards, storekeepers, Government officials, all of them armed, were taken with the first throes of panic.

The Governor saw them, their wives and children, coming from the roofs, laden with what treasure they could carry, and struggling through the mob toward that Granary which was called the Castle. He spoke to his aides, and to a young officer at his side who was his son. They went hurrying with their orders.

The garrison at the barricade and in other quarters of the city turned and formed and, in good order, awing the mob in the streets, fell back to the Granary. The Governor wheeled his horse, and headed the column from the barricade. Felix and the mob possessed the city of Guanajuato, all but its stoutest edifice, the Municipal Granary, now the citadel.

The Mexicans of the town, finding themselves deserted by their Governor before they recognized their own indifference as desertion, now precipitately knew their own minds. The city being left in their own hands to defend if they would, in the eagerness of panic they made known that such was not their intention, and clamored about the invaders, yelling: "Long live Independence! Death to the Gachupins!"

Felix, mounted on the horse of a fallen dragoon, leaned over the saddle among them.

"Where did the carriage—Trujillo—Where did the Spaniards go?"

"To the Castle, to the Granary, Señor General," the nearest yelled. They threshed the air with their arms or tugged at his stirrups, offering to lead him to the place.

Felix looked back. His tattered hundreds were massed behind him in the road. He nodded down to the upturned faces. They understood.

"To the Castle! To the Castle!"

They intoned it shrilly, as a refrain that leaped like crackling flame.

Jammed between walls, now climbing by

steps hewn in the rock, Felix and his army or mob fought through the rapidly friendly populace. The way opened on a *plazuela*, and here, opposite a church, some candied figs and yams in the window of a *dulceria* caught the eye and quickened the sweet tooth of a peon miner.

The man had been immured among the hills, within the black dampness of the hills, for weeks past. Bizarre as it seems, his dry throat, hoarsely crying "Death!" began to water at the nearness of candied figs and yams. He felt the knotted end of his breech-clout for coppers. Then, in abrupt, lawless joy, realized that he needed no coppers. With a yelp he sprang at the bars of the candy-shop window.

It would have been a match to tinder. Instantly the closed stores and shuttered homes of the town would mean pillage to the horde yet crying only "Death!" Felix swerved to the walk and dragged the man back.

"Death first," he ordered, "then candy."

"That's all right, Don Felix," said one of the Vera Cruz Creoles. "You have stopped it for the present. But have you forgotten? Any moment, now, and they'll be breaking open the prison and jails."

Felix started. He had forgotten. A girl's peril and his love had made him forget.

"And should they find your father—"

"My father?" echoed Felix. "Fire fought fire in his mad eyes. 'The Granary can wait,' he cried. 'Lead to the jails!'"

They found that jailers and guards had fled, and the mob stormed the doors, but always Felix was first in, rushing from cell to cell to deliver, and protect from his deliverers, a dear white-haired old man who might be among the prisoners. But nowhere did he find him. The Viceroy's prisoner was nowhere in the jails of Guanajuato.

"Courage, Don Felix," said his Creole friend. "Trujillo lied, that was all."

"Or else he's taken my father to the Granary with him. Now, quickly, where is the Granary?"

CHAPTER XVIII

THE O'DONOJU TITLE OF LEADERSHIP

THEY were then in the low-lying quarter of the city, where the jails were. When Felix demanded the Granary, they urged him eagerly, "Only a turn, a little prome-

nade, Señor General," trotting beside him.

A promenade it was, up a dry torrent-bed called the Guanajuato River, and across a bridge, and then around the corner of a walled-in enclosure into a wide street that sloped upward between a church on one side and the wall of the enclosure on the other side. The street passed before one end of the Granary itself, and from there rose steeply up a hill just behind; so that the Granary, a spacious, imposing, flat-roofed edifice, lay like an immense slab of stone at the base of the hill and was dominated by the smaller houses covering the side of the hill.

Young Felix O'Donoju, with his Creoles and his *Inditos* and the populace of the city, did not reach the Granary. As they turned into the wide street they swarmed plump upon a barricade that crossed the street from wall to church. Armed Spanish civilians rose in the trench behind, and spasmodically pulled the triggers of muskets.

Possibly a score of balls took effect, which checked the onslaught not at all, but then something much more terrific happened. A young officer in lieutenant's uniform sprang on the barricade, and hurled at the besiegers an iron flask with a spluttering fuse. The flask was one used for transporting quicksilver from Spain to the mines of the New World, quicksilver being required in the treatment of gold ores, but the young lieutenant had ingeniously made the flask into a grenade by filling it with powder and bits of metal. The fuse was short, and the bomb exploded in the faces of the assailants almost as it left his hands.

Felix, his horse literally blown from under him, yet himself untouched, rose to find his men pressing back upon their fellows behind, past all virtue of shouts and commands. He could check them only when they had retreated out of the street back toward the river, behind the sheltering wall.

"Who was he, the man with the grenade?" he demanded. Chagrin at his repulse was yet mingled with fine admiration for the author of it. To know the identity of this man whom he must kill, or be killed by, loomed big with importance. His relations with the young lieutenant had become, in a second's breath, of eternal intimacy.

He pressed his question, and at last one of the natives of the town told him.

"It was the Governor's son, señor."

Felix blanched. "The Governor's son!"

That was he, Don Felix O'Donoju. But how different! This other Governor's son was behind the breastworks, defending his father in the citadel. Their cause was one.

"Happy lad!" said Felix to himself.

"It's Don Gilberto de Riaño, then," spoke one of the Creoles. "His regiment is in the capital. He could be here with his father only on leave of absence."

So, a leave of absence, a slightest whim of chance, had brought him to his father's side while the father's need was yet unforeseen!

"And happy fortune!" added Felix in his misery, "if blind hazard were as kind to us all!"

A tear, a drop that stung, falling on the back of his hand suddenly angered him.

"He and his father, then," he cried aloud, "at them, at them, till I come to mine!"

The Creoles shook their heads. "It's like charging a volcano," said one, "but we will be the first to follow you, Don Felix, and drive these peons to it, too, if you say so. Yet think; we have so few muskets, and almost no powder left——"

"Stop," Felix interrupted, "we have thousands of men, a flood——"

"True," said the Creole, "and we could sweep over that barricade barehanded, as to that, losing maybe not a hundred. But then we'd come to the Granary itself, a fortress of stone walls. You must have seen it?"

"I remember a big building up the slope," said Felix, "the third on the left, at the foot of the hill. But if that box-like palace is a granary——"

"It is," the creole insisted. "It's for storing corn against a year of drought. But Governor Riaño had a fortress in mind when he built it. Everybody calls it the 'Castle.'"

Felix pushed back a matted lock from his eyes. He flung his ragged arms, one quite sleeveless, in a hot gesture of impatience, and stamped the ball of one sandaled foot into the dust. Then he straightened, more and more calmly. The mad fire in the bloodshot eyes seemed to die out. He felt the need of pause if he would be sure. A hard smile fastened on the mouth once sweet and merry, and now naked iron in its strength.

"Have they cannon in their Granary?" he asked.

"No," they replied, one or another of the town prompting, "they have no cannon. Only muskets and those grenades and a

store of provisions. And maybe twenty peon women who make corn into *tortillas*, and a well in the *patio*—everything prepared days ago for a siege, everything which——"

"Which they will not need, señores! What other streets lead to the Granary?"

"Only two, Don Felix, but they also are barricaded. And of the Granary itself they have walled up all except the front entrance, facing the hill."

"That hill?" exclaimed Felix. "It is covered with houses, and the roofs are flat. And here we have men with slings. Let a hundred miners break rock for slings down there in the rocky river-bed. And our giant-killers shall cover the housetops on the hill. They will care for the Granary's garrison, at roof or windows, while we others here below storm the barricade and sweep down those Granary doors."

"H'm," spoke a gently sonorous voice, "that is strategy, I think, or is it? H'm, strategy ready at our hands. General, we must thank this ragged young Hannibal."



FELIX faced about, wondering who among his panting, excited followers could have spoken so placidly, even benevolently. What with the confusion near him, and the buzzing maelstrom of sound eddying and whirling everywhere with the populace, he had not noticed a rising tide in the deep volumed mutter. There were shouts through the streets as some word of big import was caught in the vortex, and these single voices were swelling into the mightier roar of thousands. So intent, too, was Felix on his desperate problem that neither had he remarked a movement, a giving away and making room, among the disordered Creoles around him. But now, at the lone, serene voice musing on his words, he looked and perceived that a group of uniformed cavaliers—prodigiously uniformed, as if Napoleon's dashing marshals were sternly posed for an artist—had ridden thus far into the city, and had here drawn rein to contemplate his own motley disarray.

Which of them had spoken or could possess that deeply vibrant, benevolent voice?

The shouldering against his peons, miners, his raw yeoman host, had not abated. It became a sudden jostling near at hand, and he looked whence the Napoleonic strangers had come, and saw the first of their army

pressing forward to join them. It was not quite a Grande Armée, but fully a hundred dragoons were now in sight, spurring their horses against the throng. Felix strained to his tiptoes, gazing fixedly. His thoughts blackened into despair, for his father, for that other dear one. The dragoons wore the uniform of Spain!

"Don't give way, don't give way!" he cried over the heads of his swaying, jostled mass. His voice was piercing, frantic. Tears were in his eyes. "Fools, don't you see they are Spanish re-enforcements? Close on them! With your knives! With your knives! Oh God, that you were tigers, that I——"

But the mass heard nothing of his appeal. They were beginning to shout the indistinguishable word of big import. Even the battered and stanch Creoles were strangely lethargic, except those nearest, and these grappled with him. For alone, with only his *machete*, he had leaped to attack the Napoleonic group.

Then, as he struggled to free himself, cursing his friends for traitors, the calm voice fell again on his ears.

"Young Hannibal assailing an army single-handed? Bless us, even I may perceive that that's not strategy. Superb, though—h'm, yes; and 'tis I myself would thank him. You and his friends there, release him, I beg."

Felix stared again at the Napoleonic galaxy, and where Napoleon himself should be, he perceived an inconspicuous mounted figure in the modest black cloak of a gray-haired village curate. It was he who had spoken, and he was looking down at Felix, his large, friendly, ruddy brown face beaming in a mildly contemplative way. Then the word of big import boomed among them: "Hidalgo!"

Felix's countenance underwent a contortion of dazed readjustment. On the stout chest of the good old man—he was nearing sixty at the least, for all his massive vigor—Felix saw a glittering symbol. It was an image in gold of the Virgin of Guadalupe. His puzzled gaze went to the others. On the gold-colored chest of the mightiest likewise glittered that image of the poor Indian's guardian madonna. And in the caps of the lesser officers, in the Spanish casques of the dragoons, in the ragged sombreros of peons bearing lances, there again was the Virgin's portrait, a cheap, colored print. And there

was a standard raised high; our Lady of Guadalupe again, in oils, on canvas, as the picture was taken from its frame behind a church altar.

The city was crying "Hidalgo," shouting "Hidalgo," crying, "Long live the Virgin of Guadalupe and death to the Spaniards!"

"But these dragoons?" stammered Felix. He was already convinced. The question came mechanically from his despair of a moment before.

The curate nodded indulgently. "I see the uniform of Spain troubles you. But they are Mexicans within, my son. They were the Queen's Regiment, and Allende was their Captain. Now they have loyally followed Allende into the service of their country."

"Allende?" repeated Felix.

"The same, now Lieutenant-General of America."

The inconspicuous priest indicated, with an affectionate smile, the horseman on his right.

Felix saw a soldierly, resolute and superbly handsome man sitting his magnificent charger as if born to the saddle. His gorgeous uniform of blue and crimson facing was crossed over the heart with a cordon showing his high rank.

"Allende?" Felix repeated again.

"And you, señor peon," spoke the newly fledged Lieutenant-General with engaging courtesy, "the favor of a word as to your title and authority. Here the Señor Generalísimo Don Miguel Hidalgo—" He turned in filial respect to the priest—"and the army of America, thousands strong, here do we march to take a city, and we find—Jupiter, we find the city taken already by a tattered, barefoot peon youth! Now by all the glory of war, we are curious. What slayer of Gachupins have we here assaulting a castle with slingstones? And this rabble, following you to it like devoted dogs! Come, the secret? I'd give my cordon for your title of leadership."

"Leadership?" murmured Felix. "But I wasn't aware of leading anybody. We came along together."

"Bless us, bless us," murmured Allende, "A natural leader, eh, *padre*? Eh, wouldn't you say——"

"I would say," replied Hidalgo, "that we seem to have found another General."

Felix interrupted. "You will help me take that Granary?"

"We, help you? Ho, it's an independent power offering alliance."

"I can not wait. Help me take that Granary, or——"

"Or?"

"I'll do it without you!" said Felix.



HIDALGO interposed, gently reproving.

"My son," he said in his deep, winning voice, "some powerful motive, whether patriotism or insensate revenge, has lost to you all sense of perspective. But the Captain-General of his country has no time to argue with mutiny. Yet one question, I think, will set you right in your bearings. Tell me, how would you take the Granary?"

"Why," said Felix, "I shall call on an army to follow me, your army included."

"Jupiter, young ragamuffin," exclaimed Allende, "you are astounding!"

"Not in the least," retorted Felix. "Lead them yourself as I ask, or I shall tell them that Riaño and the Spaniards have taken millions of treasure with them into the Granary. That they have taken the royal and municipal funds, the tributes and taxes, the strong chests of Gachupin merchants and mine-owners, bags of coin, bars of silver, ounces of gold. What of perspective now, Señor Curate? Shall I raise my voice for an army?"

"And lose your brains?" demanded Allende, leveling a dragoon pistol at the young mutineer's head.

"No, no, they're good brains," said Hidalgo. "One word, if you please, General Allende, and we may save them yet to our cause. You forget, my son," he addressed Felix, "that there is a courtesy even in warfare, which requires that the besieged be given a chance to surrender."

"Surrender?" protested Felix. "We've had taste enough of asking Gachupins to surrender. We gave Trujillo the chance back there, and he fired on us, and it was your own son, General Allende, who fell among the wounded. And Trujillo is there, now, in that granary."

"Stop!" cried Hidalgo, his voice rising sternly, for the first time on the note of command. "Stop, or you will have even my Lieutenant-General joining your mutiny! Wait! Trujillo does not command in there, but an honorable man, the Governor, Riaño, who is my friend, and I shall offer that friend honorable terms of surrender."

"Yes, yes," said Allende, "but José, my son, is back there somewhere, wounded. Tell me where—you, Señor Stranger—tell me where. A regiment, if need be, shall go back for him. You came with José, then, you and these others; you came with him from Vera Cruz?"

Felix nodded. Quickly he told of their march from the sea, and of the encounter with Trujillo on the way.

"Trujillo," breathed Allende, "we will rope Trujillo's gutted carcass to a burro, and drive him before us into the Viceroy's palace. Only hasten your messengers to Riaño, *padre*."

"And will your messengers," demanded Felix, "ask of Riaño, that he will protect Trujillo's prisoner, the helpless girl I told you of, from Trujillo's villainy; and protect you my father?"

"Your father? His name?"

"Señor Don O'Donoju, Governor of Vera Cruz!" said the ragged peon, calmly.

Amazedly, the curate-General promised. "But my promise is unnecessary," he added. "I pledge you that Riaño will let no harm befall any prisoner in his garrison."

"Thank you for that assurance," said Felix earnestly. "I can now wait, and if you want one more recruit, here I am."

Riaño's reply did not come till the next morning. As Commandant of the garrison, the welfare of all the prisoners rested on his honor. He rejected the demand that he capitulate.

Hidalgo, where he and his staff were quartered in the city's barracks, at once made ready to take the Granary by assault.

CHAPTER XIX

JUAN DIEGO

FOR the demoniac thousands outside it was the taking of the Bastille over again. For the despairing hundreds within it was the prototype of the fall of the Alamo. The Granary was a rock in a swirling sea, beaten by the waves, clouded in frothy spume, then seen again, bleak, immovable. And the screeching of the storm! It drenched the air. It harrowed the soul.

From the housetops on the hillside behind, the sharpshooters raked the Granary windows, which themselves belched red-veined smoke. From the heights, densely

massed peons, simple *Inditos* with only their slings, maintained a hail of rock on the defenders of the Granary roof. Nearer, eddying human beings swept to the very base of the walls, receding, surging, receding, surging. The outlying barricades, futile reefs of earth, had melted under the flood long before.

Tossed on the crest of the swell was a man on a horse, a priest, conspicuous among mounted generals because of his black garb. His hat was gone, and white locks fringed the pink dome of his skull. But he held a pistol in his hand, his dark eyes burned with a steady luster and his gesture commanded the waves.

The priest watched mostly, among the crushing horde, certain half-naked, rusted-skinned, stringy-muscled fellows, toilers from the mines, who crept like gutter-cats under the windows, hugging the wall, and with great bars of iron attacked the solid stone. The fire from the windows, which strewn dead bodies under the feet of the swarming thousands, blazed over the miners' heads, as did also the grenades hurled into the mass that burst and cleared a momentary space of flame and mangled flesh. But the walls were too thick. The slaughter while they crumpled the masonry piecemeal would be too costly. The priest raised his arm, pointing with his pistol.

"The doors, my children! The doors!"

He pointed out the heavy wooden doors that formed the Granary's main entrance. The one other entrance to the place had been walled up.

"*¡Aí!* the doors!" shrieked those nearest the priest, and it became yet another of the dreadful battle-cries.

Six or eight miners, bending low, glided along the base of the wall, then sprang, with crowbars poised overhead, at the massive curtain of oak. The throng behind, wielding clubs and pikes, crashed on them, too frantic to wait for the work of the bars. From above the besieged fired down and dropped their bombs. Then the doors abruptly opened, and a man leading twenty men, all with sabers, hewed outward into the jumbled mass.

The man who led was Riaño, the citadel's valorous and reckless Governor. He and his twenty slashed themselves a clearing as large as the sweep of arm and weapon, and were falling back, some with their dripping blades broken short, when Riaño, turn-

ing for another look at the wolfish pack, was seen to shudder, and drop like a plummet into the sea.

They dragged his body inside, and heaved the doors shut against the resurging horde.

A dull moan rose within the Granary as word went from room to room, up to the roof, that their leader was slain, and the moan was punctuated by the sharper shriller cries of panic. Hoarse voices also warred in altercation. Who should command now? Between the fangs of death the Spaniard's lust for power fought it out.

"It will be Trujillo!" muttered one among the besiegers outside before the doors.

He was young and in Colonel's uniform, this man; and his new trappings, donned for the first time that morning, were torn and slashed and powder-burned.

"Trujillo," he muttered, "and the honor that protected my darling is a corpse!"

The figure of a man passed swiftly before one of the windows inside, a man holding a woman between him and the window; and the battle-wracked young Colonel outside recognized both Trujillo and the white face of the girl. Had the resourceful scoundrel perhaps a secret way of escape—if there were one Trujillo would know it—and was he even now escaping, taking his captive with him? The young Colonel's eyes fell hungrily on the huge doors, where other miners had caught up the crowbars of those who had fallen.

"Too slow! Too slow!" he moaned. "That oak's tougher than masonry."



HE TURNED to some of his men, pressed close around him in lack of all discipline. A moment later he seemed to be deserting the scene and, a handful of his men helping him, savagely shouldering his way through the tumult. The priest saw the action, and a pang of disappointment saddened his face, but he was too far removed to order the deserters struck down. Directly, however, when he was losing hope of forcing the doors under the havoc concentrated at that point by the frantic garrison, he perceived the young officer and his handful returning. They were staggering under a barrel of pitch and carboys of turpentine.

"The brave young mind of him!" murmured the priest.

He spurred his horse toward him, clearing the way, and General Allende from

another quarter did the same. Bullets fell like a slanting rain, and a grenade tore away the legs of men from under the barrel. The young Colonel, who was a little in advance, struggled up from where the explosion had thrown him, yelled to others and was among the first to hoist the barrel from writhing bodies.

So he brought it at last through the smothering musketry to the door. There also they smashed the carboys, thrust a torch into them and drew back as the flames leaped up the oaken boards.

As the smoke rolled upward, lapping the stone wall and flooding into the windows, many of the besieged thought they were to be burned alive, and what had been panic among the armed civilians became crazed terror. There were those who began throwing bags of coin down into the horde, in some vague insane hope of appeasing blood-thirst with treasure.

On the roof the defenders were driven below. Spanish merchants dropped their muskets and, followed by their screaming women, ran here and there through the warerooms, seeking a place to hide.

A provincial official tied his handkerchief to a bayonet and waved it from a window.

There was a lull outside. The white handkerchief meant surrender. But young Riaño, the dead Governor's son, unaware of the provincial officer's act, continued hurling grenade after grenade into the mass below.

The besiegers vented a howl of rage. Now not one should be left alive! Not a Spaniard! Not one!

They threw themselves against the burning door, again and again. It splintered, gave way and they crashed through the flames inside. The first of them was Felix O'Donoju, that young Colonel who had brought the barrel of pitch.

Just within, with muskets leveled to command the doorway, stood a platoon of provincial infantry. An officer who had marshaled them there waved his sword, crying, "Now!" and they fired as the besiegers poured in.

Felix had tripped and stumbled over the bottom beam of the door, which had not burned through, and those behind fell before the volley, even as they trampled over him. To rise he had not only to throw off their bodies, but fight his way up through the dense mass still crowding in through the burning doors.

Once up, he started for the *patio*, or courtyard, just ahead, meaning to track down Trujillo and save Victoria. But there was the platoon still barring the way, clubbing their muskets, and their officer, holding the colors of Spain in his left hand and with his right plying his saber. Felix recognized him as young Riaño, whom he had confronted the day before across the barricade.

An overpowering friendliness rose in him suddenly and poignantly for this other Governor's son, for this other young Creole like himself, whose happiness it had been to fight at his father's side, and now in tragic loneliness was still fighting in that same cause.

"Give way! Come with me!" Felix cried to him, lowering the point of his own saber.

It was no call to surrender. It was a pleading. Felix craved as a boon the joy of saving a foe like this.

Young Riaño was slashing at the lances of the invaders, but he heard Felix's summons, and his eyes sought him out. The scorn that was in them for his peon antagonists flashed to a welcome.

"Come! To it, to it!" he called. He even dared the peril of a salute, raising his saber-hilt to his lips, but Felix swept back the peon lancers and stood before him.

"I must pass," Felix cried to him quickly above the din. "Come with me."

The other bowed rigidly. "Pass, señor," he said, presenting the point of his saber.

"Sir, I must," Felix replied, "but my esteem goes with it! There!"

Young Riaño fended the thrust. "Of course. And mine, *caballero*."

Felix felt the point through his jacket, but before Riaño might recover his guard as many as ten lances pierced his body.

"You dogs!" Felix snarled back at the pack as Riaño fell, still gripping the colors in his left hand.



BUT the way was cleared into the *patio*, and Felix sprang ahead.

The besieged were scurrying from the court into the storerooms that opened upon it. Some, who were soldiers, cowered in the farthest corner, under the portico of the court, holding their weapons tremulously, mechanically waiting to make a last stand.

Felix, saber in hand, was unaware of forms that shrank from him as he ran. He

struck none of them. He merely toppled over those who could not crouch out of his way in time. He was only dimly aware of shrieks and dull blows, as the first of the horde rushing in behind him took up the work of massacre. Already fugitives were being dragged from dark passages among bales and boxes, and murdered. Felix's haste became frantic. He must save Victoria, not now from Trujillo, but from these meek and lowly Indians whom she had so pitied.

To save her? But there was the need to find her first. He thought of Trujillo, and tried to think as Trujillo must have thought. There was no way out, that was certain. What then would the shrewd old gray rat do when trapped thus by a rising flood?

"By Santiago, the stairs!" panted Felix. He darted up them, three steps at a time, once slipping in blood. He wasted no search on the upper story, a bedlam of dreadful waiting for the tide of slaughter to rise, but kept on to the roof.

The downpour of rocks had ceased. The Indians with slings had left the hillside and housetops, and had swooped down into the city, joining the populace in an orgy of loot. Felix heard it rising on all sides—a hungry, vicious, roaring snarl, pierced by yelps. The flat roof before him, littered ankle-deep with stones and strewn bodies, was for a moment as isolated, as deadlly silent, as a cemetery in a burning town.

At a first anxious glance the roof seemed bare of the living, unless some of those half buried under the rocks yet breathed. But, Trujillo, if he were there, would be very still indeed; very, very still.

Felix mounted on up to the last step, ravenously scanning the barren, mesalike desolation. Something moved, or he thought it did, in a corner of the parapet. His gaze strained on the place as he hastened toward it. Then the moving thing rose to its knees. He saw a girl's face—Victoria's. Her arms stretched toward him in an agony of appeal, or delirium of thanksgiving; he might not say which. Then a hand with brutal, thick fingers reached her shoulder, and dragged her down. At a bound Felix stood over the prostrate man who quivered behind her.

"Get up!" he said, raising his saber. The cords in his wrist leaped and tightened with the voluptuous fierceness of the grip.

"Up, thou beast, thou beast!"

"Felix," screamed the girl.
"Felix!"



THAT was another voice, a voice that left him trembling, and turned the stone of his heart to a pulp of throbbing and yearning. He looked, and next the dog he would kill rose a broken, white-haired old man, putting forth a palsied hand of command.

"Father!"

"The battle is over, my son," said the old man. "It would be murder now."

"Father!"

The young O'Donoju took the palsied hand and drew the old man to him. His tears fell on a scar circling the old man's wrist. Yet, unseeing, not knowing, with his other hand he lifted the girl. His saber had fallen at his feet.

"Father!"

"Riaño brought me here," said the old man. "He said the jails were not safe. Generous, brave Riaño! But he also took off my chains and, when the doors burst open below, I followed Trujillo here; Trujillo and Victoria. It was to save her, if I might, and Trujillo told us to lie down, for that was our only chance."

"For you, yes," said Felix, "and for her, thank the dear God. But for him——"

He caught up his sword as Trujillo squirmed toward it.

"For him——"

Both the old man and Victoria clung to his upraised arm.

New and unexpected hope began to glitter in the eyes of the wretch at their feet. Trujillo rose, his manner fawning for permission. Disgust sickened the three who gazed on him, the more because of his imposing frame, the empty shell that had once seemed a stern martial presence.

"Your Excellency," they heard his guttural whine. "Your Excellency will save me!"

The old Governor, broken, disgraced, shamed by this man in his every instinct of Castilian knighthood, turned his head for shame of this other Spaniard.

Trujillo misunderstood. He had a sudden terror that His Excellency was repenting the impulse to mercy. He began to plead, his fishlike lower lip thrust out, his furtive eyes roving deep in their sockets, now abject, now gleaming.

His life was precious to His Excellency,

he said. Don Felix should know that, and pause, for his father's sake, before he struck. For who might restore to His Excellency his good name, his honor, his exalted position, but himself, Trujillo? Moreover, he, Trujillo, would be that beneficent witness. He would go to the Viceroy. He would recant!

It was the old O'Donoju who stopped him.

"Rehabilitation?" he echoed in cold scorn. "Rehabilitation, out of the mouth of a liar?"

"It can—can come from no one else, Your Excellency."

"Thou soul of a rat, I want it from no one. From no one. From an ingrate country I reject it utterly, for I—I— Heaven pity me, I reject my country! My country, I have none— Oh, Felix, my boy, my boy, 'tis for you, like that first O'Donoju who founded our line, 'tis for you to be another first O'Donoju, to found another line, to win another country!"

"And may I not, father!" cried Felix from a blithely singing heart. "May I not, if so be 'tis a bride I've won already? Look—father, look, look! Oh, how blessed I am, how—" Against his cheek, as he lowered his head, her cheek lay, and he knew that her eyelashes were wet.

Wrapped in a world of just the three of them, they had forgotten Trujillo. But the hideous din of the pillage-mad pack below brought them back to a nearer reality. The din mounted. Abruptly it burst on them. The first of the mob were crowding up the steps to the roof. Then they noticed Trujillo, strangely active. He had cast off his uniform coat and, instead of cowering from the insensate assassins, he ran to meet them.

"What say you to another Spanish Governor?" he cried, pointing backward at the

white-haired O'Donoju. "There, then, there, I give him to you. Him, and his son. They are yours. Pest! Rend them, *muchachos!*"

The mob started past him for these newer victims. But yet others of the mob, coming behind, seized on Trujillo, and he saw cherry-red knife-blades everywhere about him.

"Wait!"

For the space of a moment he threw them off.

"Wait! You are killing a friend! I will prove it to you. Come. You shall see where Riaño hid the gold ounces."

"The gold ounces!" shrieked a peon. "Come, come!"

As in an undertow they drew him down the steps. They forgot the prey of flesh and blood for the hidden gold. Felix, his father, his sweetheart, were alone on the roof.

"They are mad children, mad children," murmured the girl, a vast pity battling with horror in her tender eyes.

Felix recalled the madonna of Guadalupe.

Directly an *Indito*, a miner naked to the waist, stringy-muscled, his bronzed torso dripping sweat, hurried alone up the steps to the roof. He was childishly intent on some project that absorbed him. In his left hand he held a candied yam, on which he nibbled.

Felix recognized him as the Juan Diego of the sweet tooth, who had wanted to loot a candy-shop, who since then evidently had looted it. In his other hand he held a human head.

"We needed one," he explained to Felix, grinning tentatively, "to put on the flag-staff there. Eh, señor, these Gachupins—"

The head was Trujillo's.



the Camp-Fire



A meeting-
place for
Readers,
Writers and
Adventurers

ON OUR office wall hangs a battered canteen with the crossed sabers and letters and figures of a U. S. cavalry regiment. It was carried through a very similar campaign by the officer whom Donald Francis McGrew has made the hero of "The Grenadier," his two-part serial of the Philippines beginning in this issue. As you know, Mr. McGrew served in the Philippines and when he writes of Mindanao he knows what he is talking about.

THIS from the letter L. Warburton sent me when he submitted the story, "Red Ned of Remington's," which appears in this issue. As to the second paragraph of the same, in the very first number of ADVENTURE, November, 1910, in "Exiles of the Outlands," we printed the story of Sir Hector Macdonald, but the mystery of whether he still lives only takes on added interest with the years, and perhaps some of our readers can throw some new light upon it.

It is based on fact, and I hope may find a place with you, in your interesting magazine. If not, please return it to me, as I have taken some pleasure in writing about a man I learned to admire. If you are at all familiar with the history of the Boer War you may be aware that Fighting Mac, together with General Hunter, did actually coop Ollivier and his army up in the Wittebergen Mountains and capture the lot. It did not fall out just as related in this story, but the Guides, and particularly Burgin, enabled the capture of the left wing of De Wet's command to be effected.

By the way, have you had any matter dealing with the disappearance of Fighting Mac—General Sir Hector Macdonald? I know the facts of his disgrace in Ceylon, for I was up there at the time. Macdonald suicided in Paris when the *exposé* took place, and ever since then there have been frequent reports that the great Scottish fighter, who rose from the ranks in the conservative British army, is not dead. Only last year it was most authentically stated that he was in China drilling the native army. At any rate the idea of a fighter such as Macdonald feigning death to escape disgrace and hiding himself in a foreign country is interesting, and there is still sufficient mystery in the popular mind about the actual fate of Macdonald to make his story attractive.

In our next issue there will be a fiction story, "The Man Who Would Not Stay Dead," by Charles Neville Buck, which deals with the many rumors still current in army messes all over the world concerning this adventurer of adventurers. There are men who swear that they have seen him, in this corner of the world or in that. The rumors will not die down. Perhaps—who knows? And if it is true, well, have there been many stories its equal since the world began?

FOLLOWS a letter from Colin McKay up in New Brunswick, with a word concerning his story in this issue:

I served my time in sail, but being rather restless did not follow the sea steadily, and never got beyond mate of a sailing vessel or second mate of a passenger liner. Between times I have worked as a reporter in various cities, and done other odd jobs. Some years

ago I wrote a number of sea-stories which appeared in *McClure's Magazine* and which were more or less founded on personal experiences, but I don't know that I have had any first-class adventures. I have been shipwrecked, with a fire at sea; in prison; through an able-bodied hurricane; hungry, thirsty, frostbitten, and through the ordinary vicissitudes of the life of a sailor and rover.

I was born in Shelburne, Nova Scotia, where Donald McKay, who built the *Great Republic*, *Sovereign of the Seas*, *The Flying Cloud*, and many of the famous American clippers, learned his trade, and where Laughlin McKay, who made some famous runs with the *Sovereign of the Seas*, spent his youth.

In regard to the yarn about the "Wreck of the *Cod-Seeker*," it had long been familiar to me, and last Summer I happened to meet Mr. Smith, and got the details. Mr. Smith is a hale and hearty man, and he has a wonderfully vivid way of telling the yarn. Atwood, the other chap, is still living, his house being within a stone's throw of Mr. Smith's.

THIS is how Central America can back up Central Africa to New York through Michigan:

The following extract from a letter (dated La Ceiba, Spanish Honduras, Feb. 16) from my brother, R. N. Keever, wireless operator, may prove of interest:

"The man in charge of the orange grove is an American adventurer named Jim Cecil, and he sure keeps me supplied. I took him a copy of the *ADVENTURE Magazine*, and he almost jumped out of his chair, for he knows and was once a bosom friend of the hero of that 'Ivory Poacher' story."

Yours, W. E. KEEVER.

"**C**AMPBELL an' Me an' the B'ar" is merely the fictionized version of an actual hunting-trip in which Frank Houghton participated.

Glencairn Campbell and I did really build the shack on the Moyie and a bear did really visit the saskatoon bushes at the end of Moyie Lake—though we only saw his tracks—time and time again that Summer, alas! twenty years ago.

Mr. Houghton has "knocked about the Northern wilderness, the mountains prospecting, and the prairies cow-punching, for thirty-two years." "Prospected in Alaska, and in northern B. C. and in Cobalt one season." And there are some good Canadian stories from him in our safe.

STEPHEN ALLEN REYNOLDS gave me the following description of the Congressional medals in connection with his "Medal of Honor Men" in this number. When the style of the medals was changed in 1905 the old medals were recalled to be replaced by the new, but many of those who had so bravely worn them begged that

the old ones be not taken from them. I believe the difficulty was adjusted by allowing them to have both the old and the new, only the latter to be worn.

For the Army—The new pattern, adopted in 1905 so as to distinguish it from the badge of the G. A. R., consists of a five-pointed star of silver, heavily plated with gold. In the center of the obverse side is stamped Minerva, the goddess of righteous war. Encircling the star is a laurel wreath of green (enamel). Above the two uppermost points of the star is a bar, bearing the word "VALOR." Perched upon this bar is an eagle, bearing in its beak the ribbon pendant. Upon the reverse of the medal is engraved the name of the recipient and the date of the action for which the medal was bestowed.

The ribbon is of light-blue silk, spangled with thirteen white stars. Two ribbons are issued with each medal, one for breast wear, and a long one to wear around the neck.

The rosette, for buttonhole, is of light-blue silk spangled with thirteen white stars. It is hexagonal in shape.

For the Navy—No wreath. An anchor and star take the place of the eagle and bar. Minerva is repulsing a foe.

The ribbon is of red, white, and blue silk, something after the pattern of the national flag.

The rosette is a miniature bow of red, white and blue.

I THINK I promised some day to let the Camp-Fire hear E. A. Morphy's little anecdote of Jamaica, India, Santa Anna, and some birds. Here it is, taken from a letter to Mr. Olds. The reference to me is because my middle name was altered in some forgotten generation from "O'Sullivan." All the O'Sullivans that ever happened came from County Kerry, or maybe County Cork, and Mr. Morphy knows just how strong the Irish blood runs in me yet. (Mr. Morphy's "White Man vs. Tiger" is in this issue.)

I am very much obliged for your letter and the information therein contained. Hope Mr. Hoffman is having a good time in the West Indies. I saw 'em once in the '80's. They interested me then because my father, who had been an officer in the old First West India Regiment (what time they recruited it from slaves they rescued from slavers on the high seas), told us many queer things about Jamaica in the old days. His uncle was Governor and he was A. D. C.; and when old Santa Anna skipped out of Mexico with ten million dollars and the protection of the British, it was my respected parent's duty to try and make the old buster as happy as it was possible for the old sport to be, minus his right leg—which, from the thigh down, the Greasers held on to. Then—this will bring tears of gladness to the eyes of Mr. Hoffman—my father's Kerry breeding stood him well.

Cock-fighting was the great sport in Kerry for ages after it had been suppressed elsewhere, and my

father's intimate knowledge of the matter brought an unexpected joy into the life of Santa Anna, who long survived his abdication. That was sixty years ago. Cocking-mains were the sole delight of his old age.

In 1897—in the Khyber—we found that the Shinwaris had some of the finest fighting-cocks the world ever saw. The Shinwaris were friendlies. We were fighting their cousins, the Afridis. A friend of mine, Captain Cobbe of the East Yorks, copped a bird that beat every other in the column, which was commanded by General Hammond—mark the name. One morning to me came Staff Sergeant Danny Byrnes (of the Connaught Rangers, presently attached as Sergeant of Transport to No. 5 British Field Hospital, which was commanded by a college pal of mine). Danny used to serve mass in the same chapel as myself twenty years earlier.

"Masther Eddy," says he to me, "you're a friend of Capt. Cobbe's."

"Sure," said I.

"Then, sir," said Danny, "the Captain's a sport. I've a bird I think can stand ag'in 'Hammond'. Ask him to make a 'main' of it."

Cobbe had named his bird "Hammond" after the General, who had just issued an order forbidding cock-fighting among the troops. Well, to make a long story short, I saw Cobbe, and the fight between the two roosters came off that very day. Danny's rooster knocked Hammond into a cocked hat. As Danny tucked his bird under his arm with the suitable decorum of a non-com. in the presence of his superior officers, the great gaunt, speckled creature lifted its beak and crowed out the usual three peans of victory. Whenever one rooster flattens another it emits three triumphant cockadoodledoos. Sometimes it dies next minute; but a game bird always does its level best to whoop her up with three crows when it wins. Danny saluted gravely and edged out past yours truly:

"Captain Cobbe do be callin' his bird Hammond, Masther Eddy," says he. "If they do be askin' yez the name of Sergeant Byrnes's unknown, sir, will yez plaze say just 'Ham and eggs!'"

Of course it was the setting made the story—the gaunt roosters, the gaunt hills, the gaunt Shinwaris, with toes on 'em as big as feet, the exquisite sedateness of Sergeant Danny Byrnes and the joyous ferocity of his fowl—anyhow from that day to this I never think of a hen, or the Khyber, or anything even so far remote as the West Indies and the first Dictator of Mexico, without also thinking of General Hammond, the rooster "Hammond," and the nobler rooster "Hammond eggs."

Thus does youth revel in ignoble things while age batterns on their memory.

SOMETIMES there seems to be a bit of confusion about the Camp-Fire and the Adventurers' Club. The former is open to all—real adventurers and also those who have only the Spirit of Adventure. The Camp-Fire Club is an entirely informal organization to which all of us belong—all of us who write or edit or read the magazine. It stands for good-fellowship and a good time.

The Adventurers' Club is quite different.

It is not part of the magazine, but an entirely independent organization. No one can gain admission who has not real adventure behind him. Even a real adventurer can not attain membership till he has formally applied and been formally voted into an existing chapter or has organized a local chapter and been recognized by the general order. Like the Camp-Fire, the Adventurers' Club stands for good-fellowship and good times, but it also stands for more than that, and its restrictions are greater.

On page 2 of this issue you will find a few words on how the Adventurers' Club is faring.

FOLLOWS the account of a bit of real adventure:

I have just finished reading the "Camp-Fire" of your January issue. In fact, I always turn to "Camp-Fire" first, because I am an adventurer by trade. Now that statement is exceedingly correct, therefore I feel that the "Camp-Fire" has a right to hear from me, as one of the clan. I want to tell the "Camp-Fire" about a little incident that happened during the Madero revolution in Mexico and is positively true in every respect.

I myself held—or rather at the time I speak of held—a commission as first lieutenant in the first division of the State of Sonora, Mexico, in the Revolutionary Army. And was in the forces of Colonel Artura Lopez, or Red Lopez. I was later given a first captain's commission and still have it. But to my story:

During the early part of April, 1911, the revolutionary forces held no ports of entry and had not made much headway. Most of the Sonora rebels were in the hills, holding powwows, and sending camp-fire signals by night. Red Lopez and two hundred men were in the Ajho Mountains gathering in ammunition and other supplies. There were at least eight or ten other bands of rebels in the mountains besides us, numbering from fifty strong to three hundred, and they all declared they were going to take the town of Agua Prieta, just across the line from Douglas, Arizona, and a very desirable port of entry.

While the rest of them were talking and blowing about how they were going to do it, Red Lopez without a shot took the town of Fronteras on the railroad to Agua Prieta, and about twenty-eight miles from the town we captured several freight-trains and took what we could use in the way of provisions, etc. We also levied on the town people. We remained in Fronteras four days, and every day we would send word to the Federal commander at Agua Prieta that the next day we were coming in to take the town.

On the fourth day of this performance a freight-train came in with a string of empty ore-cars for the smelter at Douglas. We all piled in these cars, put a gun to the operator's head and made him send a message to Agua Prieta that Red Lopez and his band had left Fronteras and had headed for the mountains in the opposite direction. Then we cut the wires and smashed the instrument. Red held

the engineer covered with a gun in the right hand and the fireman with one in his left. Gave orders to go like —, and not to stop until he was at the depot in Agua Prieta.

That engineer sure obeyed orders. We certainly went like —. I expected that train to jump the track at every curve, but that train was fate, with a load of daredevils, and she held the rail, with a grounding of brakes, that sent sparks flying. We came to a stop directly in front of the depot, and, before the Federals knew what had happened, we had opened fire on them, fighting like demons. Our surprise had been too much for them: the biggest part of the garrison of about one hundred and fifty ran across the line and surrendered to the U. S. soldiers. An hour's fighting and the town was ours.

Hoping "Camp-Fire" will last a long time.

Sincerely yours, E. A. TALBERT.

ANOTHER writer who knows the sea he writes about—S. B. H. Hurst whose "Shanghaied Policeman" appears in the preceding pages. He began fooling with fishing-boats when he was nine, and at thirteen shipped in the *Conway* around Cape Horn.

Has, among other things, been around the world ten times, and touched at most of its ports, among them, Kish. As to where Kish is, I don't know. I think Mr. Hurst wanted me to ask, but I refuse.

APPPLICATIONS for our proposed identification-cards began to come in almost as soon as the number announcing it was on the stands. For those who didn't see that number I give the following brief statement:

ADVENTURE proposes a system of identification-cards, open to any reader. Each card to bear a serial number, but no name, and to have printed on it in some six or eight different languages (say English, French, Spanish, German, Arabic, Chinese and Russian) something like the following:

"In case of death or serious emergency to bearer, address serial number of this card, care ADVENTURE, New York, U. S. A., stating full particulars, and friends will be notified."

In our office, under each serial number, will be registered the name of bearer and of one friend, with permanent address of each. Letters will be forwarded to friend unopened by us. The names and addresses will be treated as confidential by us. We assume no other obligations. Cards not for purposes of business identification. Later arrangements may perhaps be made for money deposits to cover cable or telegraph notifications. Cards furnished free of charge, *provided stamped and addressed envelope accompanies application. Send no applications without the two names and two addresses in full.* We reserve the right to use our own discretion in all matters pertaining to these cards.

Later, for the cost of manufacture, we may furnish, instead of the above cards, a card or tag of aluminum, proof against heat, water and general

wear and tear for adventurers when actually in the jungle, desert, etc.

A moment's thought will show the value of this system of card-identification for any one, whether in civilization or out of it. Remember to furnish stamped and addressed envelope and to *give the two names and addresses in full when applying.*

THE post-card that follows was written less than two months after the February issue went on sale. It would seem to indicate, among other things, that a notice in ADVENTURE produces results.

Since you printed my letter in the February issue I have had about three hundred requests to join our expedition to South America. It certainly shows that the spirit of adventure is not dead yet.

W. R. HOWETT.

HERE is a letter from Eugene P. Lyle, Jr., one of the authors of the complete novel in this issue, "A Dash of Irish." It came too late for the number in which appeared "The Vicarious Outlaw" by Mr. Lyle, but it's interesting in itself, so here goes:

Instead of "Adventures I've Met," you might put it "Adventures I've Missed," which knocked when I wasn't in, and would have been, no doubt, the most entertaining and just perfectly harrowing. One has a fondness for the adventures he's missed. He tells about them, imagining they did happen, and vicariously gets to enjoying them as much as if they had happened. That's the main satisfaction in writing stories. "The Vicarious Outlaw," for instance. There you have one that missed. I missed it myself once.

I'd finished college; also a vacation in Mexico. I was coming up through Texas to startle the world as a cub reporter on the *Kansas City Times*. At that period Bill Dalton, or maybe it was another of those good old dependable train-robbers, was in full career, careering vividly athwart the Indian Territory, cross-cut, on the bias, and back-tracking. They hadn't caught him very noticeably as yet, you see.

Denison was the last stop in Texas before the train went over the bridge into the Territory. My train left Denison late in the afternoon. In the smoking compartment a big, quiet man sat. Parts of him were knobby from concealed artillery. I thought I needn't wait until I reached Kansas City to begin being a reporter. I'd begin right away. I began by finding out that the big, quiet stranger was a United States marshal. He'd got on at Denison. Fine, just fine! And up in the baggage-car he had a small regiment of deputies, bristling with imminent death.

Some one had given me a gleaming, nickel-plated six-shooter twelve inches long to slay Mexicans with. It had never been shot off. It would probably have burst. But I went and got it out of my valise now. Why? Why, because Bill Dalton—I think it was Dalton—was going to hold us up in the Territory. The marshal had got the tip in Denison. But then, Bill, he got a tip, too. The marshal and his deputies

stayed on till past midnight, but no Bill. Bill was taking a holiday that night. As I say, this was one of the adventures that I missed, and I didn't heat up any wire into the *Times* office about the awful train-robbery from their correspondent on the spot. Not until the next day, and very inconspicuously, I started in as a cub reporter.

TWO days later, when covering the depot, I met the train that was held up, the Dalton gang having let my train pass for this one. The Pullman conductor had stopped a bullet in his book of reports, and there were other miscellaneous casualties. Gnashing pangs of jealousy went through me as I took down their stories. Bill Dalton owed them no hold-up, and I felt defrauded.

As to that depot route, my first one, I always enjoyed it. Across the way was Union Avenue, the Never-Closing Lurid Way, and many a story I gathered in rapturously, and adventurous enough some of them would seem to you. But I'm mentioning Union Avenue now only because the ticket-scalpers were in their glory then, and to sell a discharged convict's ticket to an innocent traveler was no unusual thing, as happened in "The Vicarious Outlaw." The traveler, of course, believed all the time that the U. S. Government stamp on the ticket meant that it was an army officer's ticket, and it tickled his vanity to think that the conductor thought him an army officer grandly riding on a Government ticket.

IT IS only a day or two since my proposal of a "Lost Trails" department appeared on the news-stands, but responses have already begun to come in and I'm going to start the department on a small scale this month instead of waiting a whole month for the list to grow big. If you have lost track of some of the men you have met in your wanderings and want to find them again, here is your chance. ADVENTURE, more, I think, than any other magazine in the world, reaches those who follow the call of the *Wanderlust*—the men with winged feet. It is sold mostly in the United States and Canada, but you've probably noticed from the letters we print that somehow it is read all over the earth. It has a way of wandering with the wanderers. So if you want to get in touch once more with a lost friend, "bunkie," partner, mate, chum, pal, comrade, or some one you have known less intimately, ask for him under the new department that follows, "Lost Trails."

THE picking up of lost trails—here is something along that general line. I have an idea our proposed department of "Lost Trails" will prove both interesting and useful. By far the greater part of the stories in ADVENTURE—fiction as well as articles—is fact, founded on fact, or at least told by men who have had personal experi-

ence in the foreign lands they write about. It isn't strange that their stories reach other men who also are familiar at first-hand with these same countries or are even now living or adventuring in them. These tales by "those who know" bring back to mind old days, old scenes, old comrades or acquaintances.

Such a reader, perhaps, finds in an ADVENTURE fiction story a character named John Johnson. "John Johnson," he muses. "If 'John Johnson' isn't really Olaf Larsen who sailed second mate on the old *Ventura* when I—— Of course it is! One finger gone from left hand, scar on right temple, habit of always rapping on things with his knuckles—sure it's Larsen! And that business of stopping a leak that way—that happened on the *Elsie Ames* going round the Horn. Why, I'll bet the fellow that wrote that story sailed with Larsen some time! Maybe some chap I knew myself. Wish I could talk to him a minute. And old Larsen—I'd like to see him again. Maybe this writer fellow knows where he is. But just as likely old Lars is in Davy Jones's locker by this time."

And so on. A fictitious case, of course, but how often letters come to this office inquiring about familiar things and people found in a story, or adding a sidelight of fact to some tale we have published. Which brings us back to the letter I started to talk about:

IN READING the article on "Cockney No-Toes," in last month's ADVENTURE, I will venture the prediction that he was a "green hand"—along with the writer—on the "——," a "windjamming" whaler, in 1890. We left San Francisco in November, 1889, and returned in November, 1890. If he is the same, I wish to go on record as stating that a gamer man never wore shoes, as he would fight anything that ever walked, ran or flew, although an undersized man. He was both a tailor and a candy-maker by trade—and good at both of them.

I will also state that all the officers of the "——" were from Provincetown, Mass., and with the exception of the Captain, ——, were an average run of men. But I wish to most emphatically state that Captain ——, who is still in the whaling business, I think, is the meanest man, the most vindictive and the greatest coward that ever walked a quarter-deck, and was detested by all the men and also officers. But he was an excellent seaman, and made a splendid record, as he was successful in coming back with a good cargo. I will also state that the writer had the extreme pleasure of telling Captain —— his opinion of him the day we landed at San Francisco, and he took it and never opened his head. Also, I kept a log of all happenings on board, and on my return to Frisco I gave it to

the *Examiner*, and they published same in detail and raised all kinds of a furor among whaling men at that time.

If you will put me in touch with the secretary of the Adventurers' Club, would be pleased to correspond with him and attend the next dinner in New York, if I can possibly arrange matters so that I can get away—and think I would be able to do so.

Have "punched" cattle—was in charge of the last large bunch that went overland (Old Chisholm Trail) from Marfa, Texas, to Kansas City in 1887 (I think it was); knocked around the West for some years; filibustered to Cuba from Jacksonville on the *Three Friends*, and in later years have followed the staid life of selling goods on the road, at which occupation I am now engaged and likely to remain. Very truly yours, No. 26.

LOST TRAILS

NOTE.—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with any old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, give your own name if possible. All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right, in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor.

WILL Charles Goolrick, who was discharged from the U. S. N. Hospital Corps at Norfolk in the Winter of 1902-3, advise an old shipmate of his address? Address Box 511, Johnstown, Pa.

I'D LIKE to hear from, or to know what has become of, these men who were in "E" and "C" Troops, B. S. A. P., stationed in and around Salisbury, at Hartley Hills and New Fort Martin, Rhodesia, South Africa, in 1896-1897: A. S. O'Connor, Bob Ross, Jimmie Van Damme, Anton Kufek, Jack Griffiths, Julian Harries, Jack Gardiner. Address W. E. Prickett, care ADVENTURE.

WILL Edward J. Raeder, last heard of in Manila, P. I., communicate with Donald F. McGrew, care ADVENTURE.

IF ANY one knows where Trafford Eckley Smith is, for the love of Mike send word to the Australian he was down the Mediterranean, with in 1899. Address Australian, care ADVENTURE.

DICK MARTEL, who was in Hermosilla in 1887, write Wm. E. Saunders, Torresdale, Phila., Pa.

CHARLIE SCHAEFFER, who was in Sonora in 1887, write Wm. E. Saunders, Torresdale, Phila., Pa.

WHERE is Kenneth, or "Kid," MacNicoll, last heard of in Carmel, California, and Arizona? Address Tom Graham, care ADVENTURE.

WORD wanted of George Dean, of Massachusetts, who sailed on the whaling bark *Canton* to Hudson's Bay in 1893. Address Stephen A. Reynolds, care ADVENTURE.

INFORMATION wanted concerning a dealer, known as "Nemo," who worked at the Strayhorn, San Antonio, later in El Paso, and was reported to have gone to Nevada. Address Stephen A. Reynolds, care ADVENTURE.

ADDRESS wanted of Ernest F. Burchard, who was at Tonyawatha, Lake Monona, in Summer of 1892; later in U. S. Geodetic Survey. Address A. S. Hoffman, care ADVENTURE.

Talbot Mundy wishes to hear from the two following:

(1) Charlie Sutherland. Sometime 'fore-mast-hand. Later in the Bechuanaland Police. Served in Bechuanaland—the Basuto War and the Matabele War. Served on one of the Maxims in the Jameson Raid, and was taken prisoner. Served through the South African War. Later, was in charge of the Union-Castle Line Dock at Cape Town, and was last heard of on Cecil Rhodes's fruit farm somewhere near Buffalo. One of the best, whitest, manliest fellows that ever smote his enemies or yanked his friends out of the soup.

(2) Cresson, whose initials I forget. He came down through Persia in 1902, I think it was, and was quarantined at Moses' Wells for ten days, where I met him. A genial, fat American, who knew several Persian dialects very thoroughly. He had traveled all through Persia on foot, disguised, and had the finest collection of passports I have ever seen. He returned to America on the *Egypt* via the Suez Canal, and should he chance to see this he will have reason to remember the Fourth of July of that year. He, and not he alone for that matter, will never forget the "drunk" that he proclaimed and preached and that we helped him carry to a thundering conclusion. Cresson was an expert poker player, and too white to play with what he chose to call a "bunch of innocent cock-angels"—of which I was one. A top-hole man. I'd give a lot to get in touch with him again. Address Talbot Mundy, care ADVENTURE.

I WOULD like to ask in "Camp-Fire" if any of the members were in South America at the time of the Chilean war. And if any knew Cap. Clark and Mike Connors (No. 44.)

"Captain Clark."

WRITES W. Townend in the letter submitting his story "Paid" in this number: "The tale deals with the Tirah campaign on the northwest frontier of India, and the details, etc., are quite correct, as I obtained my information from men who know that part of the country."

IF THE writer of the following cared to sign his name to it, many is the real adventurer who would find it a familiar one. And many others who must do their adventuring in spirit only, or read of it in the daily papers. When the letter reached me, our new department that began in the last issue had not yet appeared, though it was already in type. If any one is qualified for membership in the Camp-Fire, then is the writer of this letter.

I HAVE been much interested in the "Camp-Fire" portion of your magazine (as well as in the stories) of which I have been a steady reader for some time past.

The thought has occurred to me that the "Camp-Fire Club" might easily grow into a sort of "Clearing-House" for those who have a longing for "the long trail, the out trail, the trail that is always new." What I mean is, that, to take one example only, there are many expeditions constantly being formed for adventure or exploration in out-of-the-way places. Now, the promoters of such expeditions often have to advertise for the members of their personnel, and take whoever offers in reply. Wouldn't it be a joy

to them if they could just drop a line to the "Camp-Fire Club" and get their choice of a number of tried and proven "Adventurers"?

That "a rolling stone gathers no moss" is in most cases a truer adage than that of "a sitting hen loses its fat" is hardly to be disputed; and those of us who have chosen to wander are not generally overburdened with wealth, though we have a far better time, according to our ideas, and certainly see more of life, than those who are content to stay at home and put out roots. But we are always ready and capable of more than earning our hire, if there is anything new and exciting to the fore.

Such a "Clearing-House" might prove of great mutual benefit both to employers and "employed."

I DON'T know whether my qualifications for membership in the "Camp-Fire Club" are sufficient, but I have served in three different Mounted Police Corps in South Africa, as well as in the Imperial Light Horse. I was through the Mashona Rebellion of 1897, and from start to finish of the Boer War, 1899-1902. Then came a turn at ranching in Alberta, Canada, followed by the making of roads in British Columbia; where I also went in for "towboating."

In the early part of 1911 I commanded some three hundred "scallywags" down in Mexico, in the interests of the revolution against President Diaz, and had quite a good time while it lasted. Now I am quietly settled down in the Moving Picture game—for the time being at least. For I feel it in my bones that it will not be long before the "lure of the trail" will prove irresistible again.

I do not wish my name published at present, though that does not detract from the heartiness of my good wishes for the success of the "Camp-Fire Club." Yours sincerely, No. 28.



WANTED
—MEN and
ADVENTURES

NOTE.—We offer this corner of the Camp-Fire, free of charge, to such of our readers as may care to avail themselves of it. Naturally we can not vouch for any of the letters, the writers thereof, or any of the claims set forth therein, beyond the fact that we receive and publish these letters in good faith. We reserve the privilege of not publishing any letters or part of a letter. Any inquiry for adventures or adventurers sent to this magazine will be considered as intended for publication, at our discretion, in this department, with all names and addresses given therein printed in full, unless such inquiry contains contrary instructions. In the latter case we reserve the right to substitute for real names any numbers or other names. We are ready to forward mail through this office, but assume no responsibility therefor.

HAS been a scholar, hobo, mechanic, petty officer in the U. S. Navy, medical examiner in recruiting stations, artist and reporter. Been over most of the world, and pretty near all of the U. S. A fair shot. "Have a first-rate knowledge of first aid and pharmacy; can speak a little Spanish and have a fair acquaintance with German; aged 22, stand 5 foot 7 inches, weight about 130 lbs. stripped, and am immune against typhoid, yellow fever, and

smallpox. Wants adventure. Ready to come or go at once." Address No. 39.

WAS in Arizona thirty years ago during the Apache trouble and got all that was coming to me. Have been pretty much all over the West, from Central America to Siberia, Canada and the Northwest Territories. Crossed the Chilkoot Pass in the early days and dug gold in the Klondike

country. I went from Lake Bennett down the Yukon to St. Nichols Island in a rowboat. Have followed the same trail as "Cockney No Toes" and, like him, was frozen in the ice, but fortunately we had plenty of grub. Have been a telegraph operator, blacksmith, cow-puncher, sailorman, miner and several other things. Have still got a hot foot and was on my way to the Peace River country in northwest Canada when I met with an accident and am laid up with a broken leg. I would just as soon go to South America as any other place if there is a prospect of having a good time. Address No. 35.

"CAN handle a gun, athletically inclined, and will stick to anything I start out in." Wants adventure. Address No. 37.

WANTS to join some one bound for Central America. Some experience as cook and stationary engineer. Address A. B. Chambers, 213 Laurel Avenue, Arlington, N. J.

REFERRING to the "Lost Mines of the Great Southwest" stories: I have been down there and am thinking of going again next Fall to put in the Winter months. While I was there I heard several allusions to the Peg-Leg and the Lost Arch, but had never heard any of the details. There seems no doubt but the stories are based on facts of some kind. In my coming trip we are going to use an auto specially equipped to travel in the sand country, and as there is gold all through the desert, as well as other valuable minerals, semi-precious stones, etc., we will not lose even though we do not find the Peg-Leg. Will carry a dry-washer that from my own experience gets all the gold there is in the gravel.

Our party is not quite made up yet. For a partner I have an expert gas-engine man to take care of the machine. I have had a lot of prospecting experience, mountain and desert, and am thoroughly familiar with the conditions down there. We will need one or two more good fellows who are not afraid to take a chance, and I thought of you and the Camp-Fire as being the best medium for getting together.

Have often wanted to butt in on the Camp-Fire, but my adventures seem rather tame to me, although comical in spots. I started at the mature age of fourteen years—left Kansas City, Mo., for Denver; to Leadville after two years at school; went with prospectors through several countries; back to Leadville; out to the Dalles, Oregon. I and two others built a raft there and had some exciting times on the Columbia River for three days. Finally landed (not by raft) at Portland; to Frisco; to Los Angeles, and lived there off and on for ten years, going every Winter to Arizona prospecting, working, etc. Last trip was in the San Gabriel Mountains back of Los Angeles, which for their size are the roughest and steepest I've seen in the West. Yours very truly, J. W. Fuhrmann, 1109 Webster Ave., Chicago, Ills.

I AM a Yank who has enjoyed some rare "fun" in Brazil and would be happy indeed if I could join an expedition into the interior, as I spent over two years in the "Pearl of South America" and am very familiar with the Cabochlo and their cus-

toms. Speak Portuguese quite fluently and am very much at home with the Greasers. Twenty-eight years of age, cheerful disposition, good build, plenty of vitality and a philosopher. Address No. 38.

I AM an American, twenty-seven years old, in good physical condition and used to hardships. Have been all over Europe, American continent, including old Mexico, part of Central America and the Antilles. I have prospected in Mexico and in the North Country; can ride and shoot; speak English, Spanish, German and some French. I would like to take part in any kind of expedition that promises something besides "treking" and also includes some material benefit. I might be able to put in some money, too, provided it is not too expensive an undertaking. For certain reasons I would thank you to withhold my name when publishing this. Address No. 25.

MY EXPERIENCES in brief are: School till I was eighteen years old; after that I worked on a farm, in an electrical supply factory, two department stores, two express companies, one steel mill, two real-estate firms, four or five theaters and one garage. I carried chain in subdivision work in Los Angeles and for the past five or six years I've been driving an automobile, always in the hope and trying hard to get into the auto-racing game, but so far I have not succeeded; so you can see that my experiences have been tame enough.

What kind of adventure do I want? I'm not particular. Being poor, I can't put any money into anything, and anything I went into would have to have some prospect of money in it. Address No. 34.

THIS man makes a specific inquiry, but as he appears more or less open to other similar opportunities I have included his letter in this department:

I read the article in your magazine of October, 1911, entitled "In Perilous Peru," by Mr. Huffman, and I am desirous of obtaining if possible the names and addresses of the promoters of this railroad now building, so if you will kindly aid me in this matter I will greatly appreciate the favor. I have lived for a number of years in Southern Mexico, where I ran a locomotive prior to coming to the United States, and I desire to get back into Latin America, and South America seems to be the best field now. Address No. 29.

A GOOD shot. Twenty-seven. Been in boats and canoes since six years old. Motor-boat and auto business five years. Fair mechanic; been in charge of two shops. Has made nine-hundred-mile canoe trip. Would like to join an Amazon expedition or similar inland water trip. Address No. 31.

IN THE February issue was a letter from R. S. Button, 744 Grand Ave., Los Angeles, California, saying he knew the location of a Pacific Ocean deposit of pitchblende from which radium is extracted, and wanted from one to four men with a few

dollars with which to fit out a small boat. A later letter says the expedition has had to be postponed till late Spring or early Summer. That would make this about the right time to apply.

ADVENTURE wanted outside of Mexico. Experience as sailor, soldier, in navy, cow puncher, engineer; fairly good with machine-gun. Address L. Bushnell, Hotel Sonora, Cananea, Sonora, Mexico.

WANTS railroad or other work or expeditions. Experience in North Africa, South America and around Mediterranean. Address No. 2.

WANTS employment where there's "something doing." Has been U. S. soldier, miner, trapper, puncher, stoker. Address No. 4.

I AM getting up a party to go around the world in a 125-ton fishing schooner. Have always wanted to take this trip, and am of the opinion that a party can be raised. We are in the passenger business here, but it is too tame on the Indian River.

About November 1, 1913, the new three-masted auxiliary schooner-yacht *Crusader* will sail from Gloucester, Mass., U. S. A., for a year's cruise, making calls along the African and Indian coasts, giving opportunity to repeat Col. Roosevelt's Uganda journey to Victoria Nyanza; touching at Madagascar, Ceylon, Borneo, and Java, and spending many weeks among the South Sea islands, returning via the Panama Canal. The party will be limited to thirty men; the cost for the entire trip will be about two thousand dollars. The *Crusader* is being specially built for comfort in the tropic seas, designed and built by McManus of Gloucester, Mass., on the well-known fisherman model that will stand anything. She will be 135 feet long by 28-foot beam, and draw 12 feet water. A 100-pound oil-motor will drive her five knots in calm weather. Power will be used to enter ports. There will be twenty staterooms, and one bathroom. She will sail about fourteen knots with a good breeze, and should make quick passages. Built of white oak throughout, the very best material only to be used. The hull will be copper-sheathed to prevent the teredo from eating the planks while in south seas.

The object of the voyage is to afford an opportunity to visit those out-of-the-way places where the steamers never go. Any men of good character are welcome to join us. References must be furnished. The trip will be run in a strictly seamanlike manner. The captain is a man of long experience in the south seas and other oceans. Address Wm. F. McCoy, Daytona, Fla.

PREFERS employment in South America or West Indies. Four and a half years in U. S. Navy, honorably discharged as gunner's mate, second class; puncher; considerable knowledge of navigation and some of aviation and autos. Address No. 12.

SERVED with Madero; crack shot; been all over Canada, U. S. and Mexico. Wants any kind of adventure that's straight. Address No. 13. (No. 13 please furnish us with better address.)

FOUGHT under Gen. Mosby in Mexico; been in Alaska, Amazon country and South America generally; has clue to gold among the "White Indians;" wants two men with some capital. Address No. 14.

AN ADVENTURE wanted. Knows Spanish. Experience with autos, gliders, telegraphy and wireless. Address No. 5.

AUSTRALIAN wants adventure. Served in Imperial Bushman in Boer War; sailor, horse-breaker, sheep-herder, railroader, customs inspector. Much experience in the Orient and North America. Address No. 7.

MATABELE Mounted Police; Jameson Raid; Coope's Scouts in Matabele Rebellion; foreign legion in Graeco-Turkish War; detective-sergeant of police in Central and East Africa; South African Light Horse in Boer War, rising to rank of captain with staff appointment; over fifty engagements; probably only American to receive the D. S. O.; Criminal Investigation Department of Government Railways in South Africa; a year in Guatemala holding various Government positions; has already had yellow fever; Assistant Commissioner of Police, Superintendent of Prisons and Sheriff on Gold Coast, West Africa; good organizer; Distinguished Certificate for Drill; knows machine-guns. Is looking for parties who can use his services. Address No. 9.

PHYSICIAN and surgeon; two years in Siam as medical missionary and in charge of local hospital system of Bangkok. Wants exciting venture needing his trained services. Address No. 11.

"AM OPEN to any kind of adventure, preferably remunerative, in any part of the world except the arctic regions. I am 32 years of age and have been in active practise as a physician 8 years and should like to go as ship's surgeon with some kind of sea-going adventure, but am in the state where I would welcome anything. Address No. 43.

THE Algot Lange Amazon expedition was long delayed. My last letter to Mr. Lange remaining unanswered, I wrote to the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania asking whether Mr. Lange's connection with the expedition had been severed. Their brief reply of March 13th is as follows: "The Amazon Expedition will sail in a few days under the leadership of Dr. Wm. Curtis Farabee, F.R.G.S., and the Commander of the Expedition's yacht is Captain J. H. Rowen, U. S. N."

No mention is made of Mr. Lange. Before I published our statement of Mr. Lange's connection with the expedition I secured thereon the Museum's O.K. Further, I know through several personal channels that our statement was correct. But apparently he is no longer in charge.

ARTHUR SULLIVANT HOFFMAN.

836 ^{9th Jan m}
 36 x 281 ²⁴⁰
 25440
 1272
 180000

In connection with its celebration of
 The 50th Butterick Anniversary and
 The 10th Ridgway Anniversary the
 associated HELPMATES of both
 these organizations will hold

26 Glorious Prize-Picking Picnics

\$1,000 in Prizes to be awarded every day

beginning Thursday, MAY 15th,
 ending Monday, JUNE 16th

This is incomparably the most astonishingly liberal offer
 of prizes ever made in the history of magazine publishing.

Any one, anywhere who is willing to act as a local sub-
 scription representative, can come to one or all of these
 "picnics" and pick up some of the prizes offered simply by
 securing a few subscriptions to *The Delineator*, *Everybody's*
Magazine or *Adventure*.

A new "picnic" starts every morning.

Separate prizes will be awarded every day to those from
 whom subscriptions have been received that day.

Hundreds of prizes are offered. There is a fair chance
 for every one. You compete only with those from whom
 we receive subscriptions the same day that your order arrives.

TRY

for a prize yourself

Secure at least 3 yearly subscrip-
 tions to *The Delineator* or 5 yearly
 subscriptions to *Everybody's Mag-
 azine* at \$1.50 each. Deduct your
 commission of 50 cents, sending us
 \$1.00 for each subscription. You
 will then be entitled to compete
 for the prizes the day your order
 reaches us.

Note that three or more yearly
 subscriptions must be sent in order
 to entitle you to the commission.
 Also, that the prizes offered are en-
 tirely in addition to the commissions
 paid you for securing the order.

The first distribution of prizes
 will be May 15th. Another prize-
 picking picnic every business day
 thereafter until June 16th.

YOU Can Win

a prize every day we receive an order from you. There is no
 telling how few subscriptions will win the biggest prizes any
 day. Every Helpmate starts on an equal footing every
 morning. You have as good a chance as anybody to win
 —if you try, just try.

Full particulars will be sent upon request.

But don't wait for further particulars. Get a few subscriptions
 right away. Send them to us with your inquiry for particulars, so that
 you can win one of the very first prizes to be awarded.

Don't wait. Every day means one prize-winning opportunity
 gone. Address

HELPMATES

THE RIDGWAY COMPANY

Spring and Macdougall Streets, New York



LEARN TO SHOOT

At Your Local Gun Club

THERE'S a fascination in shooting swiftly moving clay pigeons that must be experienced to be appreciated.

Trapshooting affords the same opportunity for skill, as shooting at live birds, and has the added advantage of competition with other shooters in the same squad.

There's a fine fellowship among trapshooters that makes the beginner's path easy. And it is axiomatic that beginners often make better scores at their first shoots than for some time thereafter.

—Write for Handsome Free Booklet—

Illustrated with pictures of European royalty and distinguished Americans enjoying their favorite pastime with the shotgun. Includes "Hints to Beginners" written by a trapshooter of large experience.

Ask for "*Sport Alluring*" Booklet No. 392

E. I. du Pont de Nemours Powder Co.

PIONEER POWDER MAKERS OF AMERICA

Established 1802

Digitized by Google
Wilmington, Delaware